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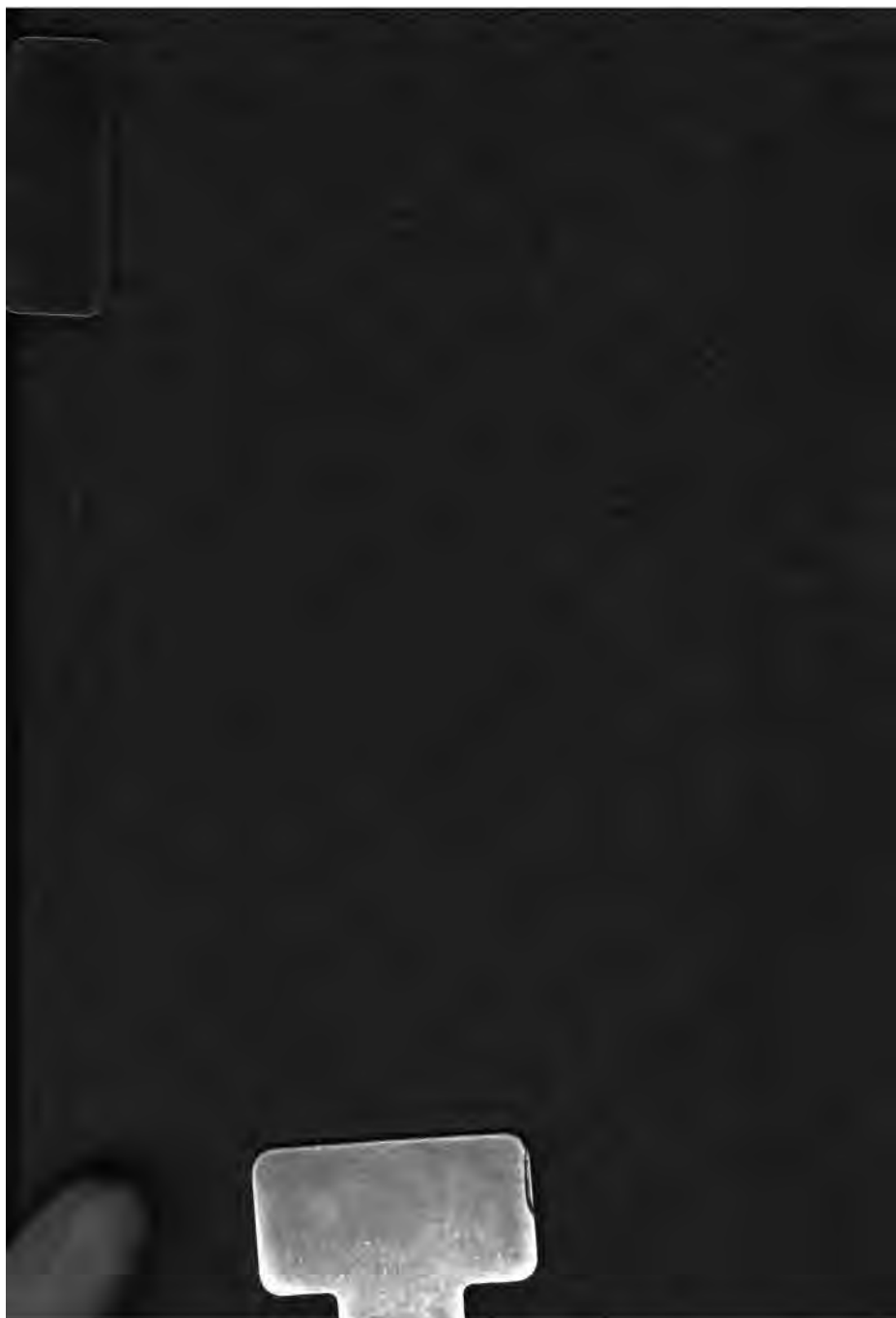
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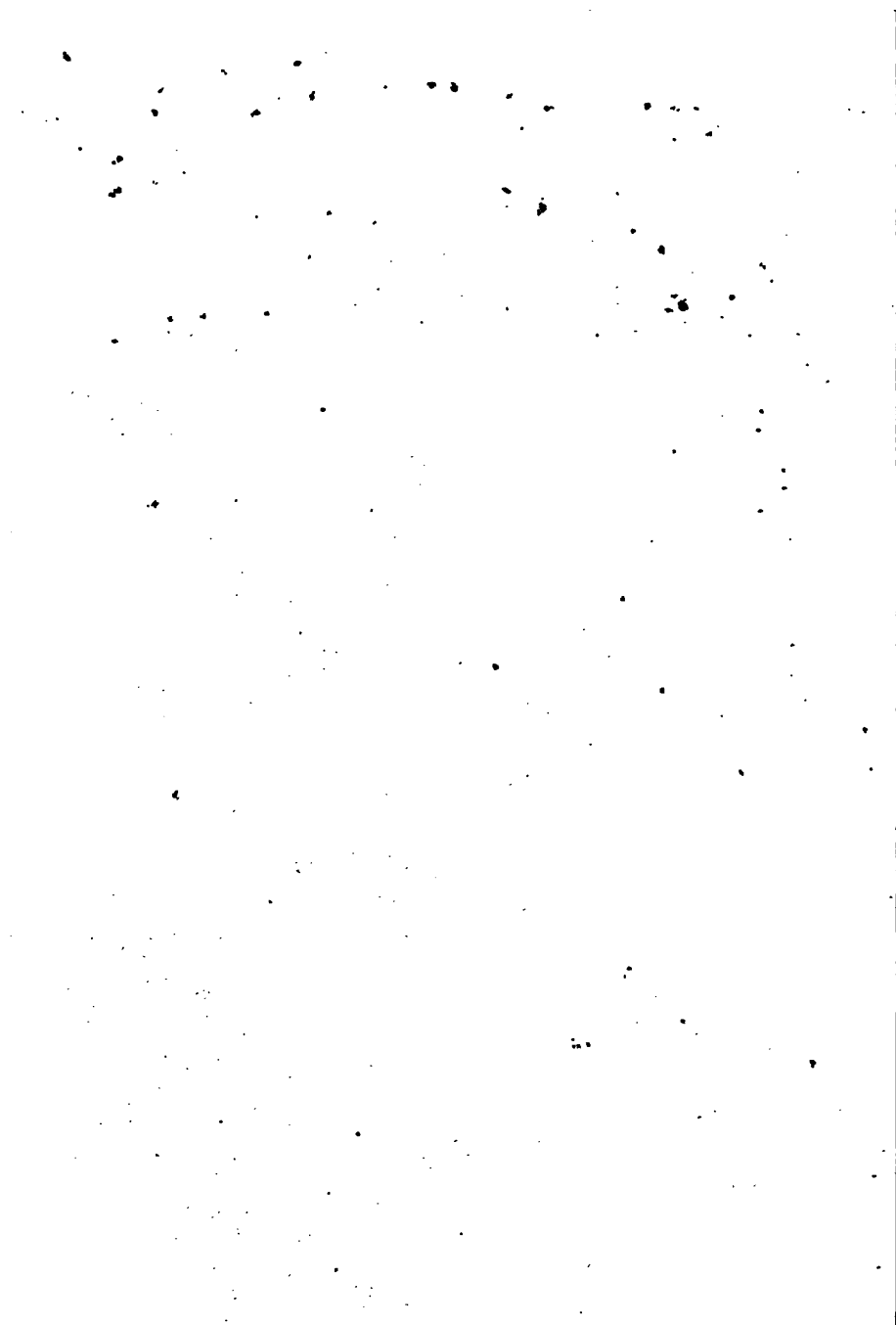
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FOOTPRINTS

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RYDAL WATER.

(Frontispiece.)

FOOTPRINTS

Nature seen on its Human Side

BY

SARAH TYTLER

AUTHOR OF "PAPERS FOR THOUGHTFUL GIRLS," "THE HUGUENOT FAMILY,"
ETC. ETC.

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS



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"He that loves nature, and can retire into a lonely nook for a purer enjoyment than the gayest society can afford him, has a fountain of restorative energy within himself such as no outward misfortune can wholly quench or disturb."

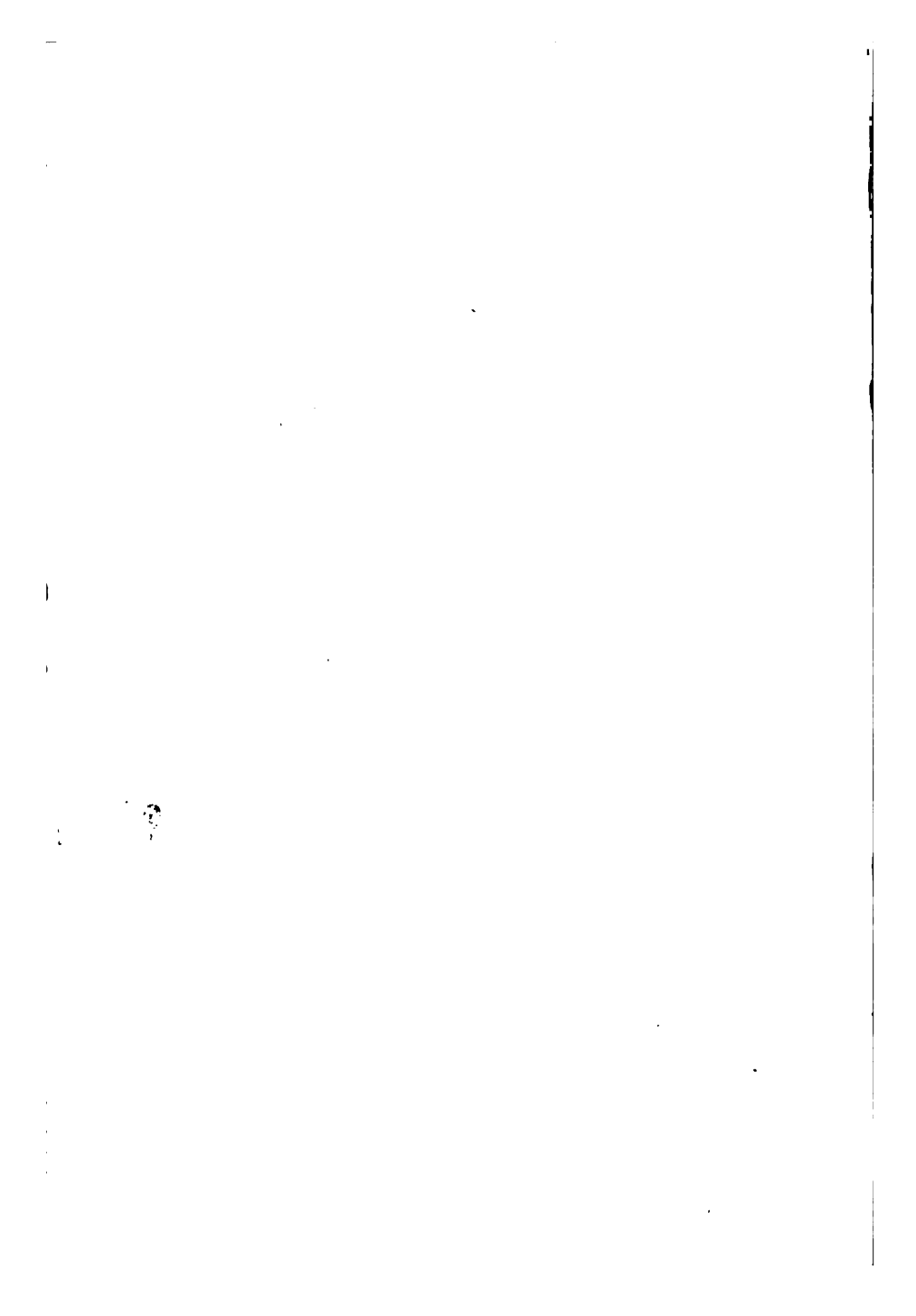
QUARLES.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. IN THE SKY; ON THE CLOUDS; AMONG THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS	3
II. ON THE MOUNTAINS, HILLS, AND MOORS	29
III. IN THE PLAINS AND ACROSS THE FIELDS	55
IV. ALONG THE RIVERS AND LOCHS, AND BY THE BROOKS	69
V. ON THE SEA AND BY THE SHORE	93
VI. IN GARDENS, AMONG HOMELY FLOWERS AND "COMMON VEGETABLES" AND FRUIT-TREES	109
VII. AMONG THE WILD-FLOWERS	161
VIII. IN THE WOODS	191
IX. AMONG BIRDS	215
X. AMONG DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND PETS	245
XI. AMONG A FEW OF THE WILD BEASTS AND LIVING CREATURES, GREAT AND SMALL, OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS	271

CHAPTER I.

**In the Sky ; on the Clouds ; among the Sun,
Moon, and Stars.**



FOOTPRINTS.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE SKY; ON THE CLOUDS; AMONG THE SUN, MOON,
AND STARS.



HE field of the blue air is a grand and glorious field—too great to be approached except very humbly as well as reverently. At the same time we know that men and women's handwriting is there, as it is everywhere in nature, over which God made men and women kings and queens

I am not thinking of the sky in a religious light only, though, in order to be true to my subject and true to my convictions, it is necessary to regard it in that sense first.

The vast space above us—so near, and yet in many respects so far beyond our reach, so familiar, and yet so strange, in spite of all the carefully ascertained and elaborately authenticated facts of science—has been always associated in men's minds with the supernatural and the divine. There the ancient Greek saw his demigods lifted up to shine in the idealized glittering groups of the constellations. There the

wild Indian placed his happy hunting-ground. The Jewish and Christian religions have also something to say of the sky in its sacred relations. Not only were "the two great lights" set in the sky to give light upon "the earth, to divide the day from the night, for signs and for seasons, for days and for years;" the sun stood still on Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon at the word of Joshua. The shadow went backward on the dial of King Ahaz at the cry of Hezekiah. The wise men saw the star in the east and came to Jerusalem to worship the King who was born. Elijah, in his chariot of fire with his horses of fire, "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." He who was greater than Elijah, as He lifted up His hands and blessed His followers, "was parted from them, and carried up into heaven;" "while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

In the present day we think of heaven—justly, no doubt—much more as a state than as a place. Still, notwithstanding all the perfectly natural, if sublime, truths of astronomy, all the earthly laws and *bona-fide* maps which regulate and bound the celestial sphere, dividing it into sections, and marshalling the stars in their order, human instinct points to the sky as the image, at least, of the invisible and the undefiled, the presence-chamber of God, the home of the blessed. Human learning and philosophy may do their utmost and best, and teach us worthily how much we can comprehend of the sky, still there remains something incomprehensible in it after all; and to the end, men and women will raise wistful eyes of faith to the firmament on high, and stretch pleading hands of prayer to it

as the nearest and the likeliest, so far as we can judge, of the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal.

Just as we are not dealing mainly with the religious aspect of the foremost of natural objects, so I do not pretend for a moment to handle the subject with reference to the wonderful old myths which great scholars expound—telling us the forces of nature were the gods of the ancients; identifying the sun with Phœbus Apollo; the moon with Diana; the fruitful earth with Ceres; the grey sea with Neptune; the blue air with Minerva. Such a treatment would demand faculties and attainments which I am far from possessing. Even the exhaustive treatment of the world of nature, in the human and historical lights and shades which men have thrown over it, would involve a task quite beyond my power. I merely wish to offer a small and simple contribution, intended chiefly to attract the attention of those who have thought little on the subject, to the study, not of man directly, but of the impression which man has left, and is for ever leaving, on the entire universe. This constitutes one of the binding links which unite him to air, earth, and water, and their creatures, and can no more be broken than the tie that makes him one with the whole race of mankind. I have not much that is new to present; my intention is more to collect and help to preserve some of the old fancies and beliefs which are being rapidly lost year by year.

What shall we say of the cloud-world, cloud-land which gives to our observation a sublimated version of the earth, with mountains and valleys, seas and shores, pillars and towers, triumphant illuminations, and lurid conflagrations?

We speak of a man's being "in the clouds" when we mean that he is reaching after a higher standard and dwelling in a loftier atmosphere than those of ordinary men. It would be well for all of us if our heads were in the clouds, in this sense, while our feet were treading the firm earth. But shall I at once transfer my readers to Mr. Ruskin's magnificent descriptions of the moving shapes and shifting hues of that vault which is like the floor of heaven trodden by angels and archangels, and which, in indifference to its glory and beauty, we so frequently forget to look at, except with a careless reference to the state of the weather? Let all who delight in a noble rendering of a noble subject study Ruskin, but, for our homely purpose, we may say our little say of the clouds, with their piled-up ranges of snowy hills, their rifts between mass and mass, their gloomy capes pushing far into the serene blue, their gold-tipped castles in the air, their fleecy, feathery, hair-like plumes, patches, sweeps, and curves when the clouds cease to seem substantial, and are torn as wool is torn, and drawn out into shreds of gossamer.

In the language of science clouds are fitly classed under the heads of cumulus, cirrus, and stratus, but let us be thankful they have more human names. They form blacksmiths' faces, flowing mares' tails, flocks of sheep, and mackerel scales to children of all ages, very much according to people's dwelling-places and avocations. When an angry sunset succeeds a stormy day, and all that the unseen sun can do is but to raise a purplish red flush in the heavy, inky clouds, then country-folk, who have often waited half hours in the village smithy, and

seen the stalwart grimy smith in the heat of his work, toiling over his bellows and furnace while his customers are gossiping at their ease, recall the look of his rugged face when red and black are striving for mastery there, see it reflected in the suffused labouring sky, and forebode, instead of a well-nailed horse-shoe or a cleverly riveted ploughshare, a thoroughgoing tempest of wind and rain.

Men who are not jockeys recognise the resemblance to tossing mares' tails borne by the floating threads of vapour which stretch far and wide in free and exquisite lines, that alone break the blue expanse. The gazers know that the winds are shaking their wings, and a warning to ships on the high seas is given in the last line of the doggerel—

“Mares' tails and mackerel scales
Make lofty ships bear low sails.”

In a pastoral country the shepherds may see their flocks passing before them across the wide field of the sky, when, after long fine weather, the clouds begin to gather, as yet only in innumerable fleecy white morsels, which look almost as cheerful and harmless as the blue sky itself. But the weather-worn, weather-wise keepers of the sheep know that a change is coming, and “wear” down their flocks from the exposed uplands.

The very same appearance of the sky is called in seaward parishes a mackerel sky; it may be partly because in Scotland, at least, the arrival of the light-flecked mackerel is the sign of the approaching departure of the herring.

It is hardly necessary to refer to the passage in the New Testament in which the Jews were reminded of their weather-

sign. By the redness of the sky, according to its presence in the morning or the evening, they prognosticated, with confidence, fair or foul weather. It is said that the evening red which heralds a fine day must have either a crimson or a purple tinge. The last qualification is on the authority of Sir Humphry Davy. A yellow sky is an indication of windy weather.

The wind, as it blew from the north or the west, was wont to be reckoned the rude breath of Boreas or the gentle sigh of Zephyrus. It is the best image of the Spirit of God, with regard to which no one can tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.

The rain and the dew descending without fail, very often received without notice or thanks, are types of God's bounties shed freely on the just and on the unjust.

There is an old Scotch rhyme which describes graphically the effects, as well as the brief duration, of what is pleasantly styled "a sunny shower :"—

"Sunny, sunny shower
Lasts but half an hour,
Gars all the sheep cower,
And all the hens clap,
And the gudewives o' Lammermoor
Put on the kail-pat."

Frost has a personality in Scotland. He is christened John—"John Frost"—and he is represented as pinching with his icy fingers the bare toes of heedless or poverty-stricken little children. Yet he is not altogether a malicious person. There is a hearty joviality in his malice, like that of Father Christmas himself. John Frost brings treasures of health and spirits in

his winter reign. It is his handwriting on the window-pane which leaves there the pure, graceful ice-flowers.

Snow is too beautiful to be without its legend, though it is not more poetical than Jupiter plucking his geese and dropping the feathers. There is rather more subtlety and fancy in the Scotch children's song—

“White bird, fatherless,
New come down frae Paradise.”

Science has its fairy tale of the snow, which is as interesting as any legend. The microscope has revealed a world of beauty in the morsels that God scattereth. “A wreath of snow,” says Dr. Hugh Macmillan, “is a bank of flowers; and we little think, when walking over its cold and barren surface, that we are treading down at every step a tiny garden. I know of no purer intellectual joy than that of gazing through the microscope upon these miracles of loveliness, and it is a careless mind indeed that is not impelled to ask whence came these figures so exquisite yet so frail and fleeting, so full of wonder and yet so long unknown, and still so little recognised by the thousands who tread them under foot. Their beauty is no chance endowment.”

“If we take the simplest form of snow,” says another writer, “or a single snow-star, and let the light play upon it, we shall see tiny rainbows flash from it, just as they do from a diamond or the triangular drops of a lustre or chandelier. Snow is, in fact, made up of transparent crystals of a prismatic form, and in their bosom the sunlight is unfrayed and darted forth in all its varied hues. In the rainbow their colours are separated

by the drops of a falling shower; in the diamond and the lustre they are separated by the peculiarity of the form of crystal and glass pendant. Just so they are separated by the little snow-crystals. If we could braid into a thread exquisitely fine filaments tinted like the rainbow, the thread would look white. Unfray the thread, and we should see the colours once more. Well, in the snow-crystals the braided beams of seven-hued light are unravelled, and in the air they are reunited. Hence the snow looks white. The little snow-crystals are worthy of very close attention. A flake is made up of many



SOME FORMS OF SNOW-CRYSTALS.

stars, and each star of many crystals. The first peculiarity of these compound crystals is that they all partake of an arrangement in sixes. The stars are all six-rayed, the plates are all six-sided, and the simplest of all the forms is a slender six-sided rod. We shall notice, too, that from these six-sided rods all the wondrous complexity of snow-stars can be built; and indeed they are so formed."

Thunder and lightning were Jove discharging his thunderbolts. They are the voice of God breaking the cedars of Lebanon.

The lovely rainbow is but the result of the sun's rays on the

water held in suspension in the clouds. Yet it is also God's bow in the heavens, His promise that seed-time and harvest shall not fail, and no farther deluge destroy every living creature. Poets and children have imagined the rainbow another Jacob's Ladder—a pathway which angels descend and ascend, which the spirits of the just made perfect tread. But even the rainbow has its sinister aspects, like beautiful things which are cruel beneath their mask of beauty. The rainbow, which in the evening is a



THE RAINBOW.

pledge of fine weather and “the shepherd's delight,” when it spans the earth in an untimely fashion in the morning figures as “the shepherd's warning;” and if the bow is broken and presents only a fragment of an arch, the canny Scot calls it a “weather-ga’,” and ranks it as the nearly invariable precursor of great disturbance in the air.

Aurora borealis, more widely known as the Northern Lights, that other marvel of the sky, is variously spoken of as “Warriors” advancing swiftly and sternly to the charge; as “Merry Dancers”

footing it with wild glee; as "Derwentwater's Lights," because on the eve of the day of the execution of the unhappy earl far away in London, these erratic visitors of the sky leapt up like fiery or pallid beacons, giving occasion for weird shadows on the doomed man's northern moors and round his ancestral home.*

In the course of a natural though exceptional effect of light and vapour, groups of people, with their occupations and surroundings, have been transferred from some invisible hillside and projected against the field of the sky, being thrown back from it as from a mirror. The phenomenon has been beheld with awe and terror by ignorant and appalled spectators. Thus the Covenanters, who met in secret and practised a rude drill in the recesses of their hills before the final rising, which culminated in the battle of Drumclog, risked unconsciously a peculiar mode of betrayal. They were seen by people at a distance like shadowy soldiers shouldering horse-pistols and scythes and skirmishing in the sky.

This incident, with similar experiences, throws light on the tales of portents and extraordinary visions in the sky, recorded as having been seen during the civil wars in England, and in London at the time of the visitation of the plague. Indeed such stories are common at all epochs, and in every country, when men's minds are in a state of violent excitement which renders them more likely to be struck by any unusual evidence appealing to the senses. A more familiar and generally grotesque

* The Esquimaux believe that the aurora (a sign of storms) is a game played by the departed spirits of their relations.

illustration of optical delusion is that known to travellers in mountain regions, when, through the mists of morning or evening, guides loom all at once into giants, and a cow is suddenly magnified into an elephant.

The air has not been so docile in men's hands as the sea has proved, though Montgolfier's balloons are no longer either novelties or mere toys. A man may meet with them anywhere in civilized countries. M. Gambetta made good use of a balloon in the siege of Paris, and one hears of "experimental balloons" from Aldershot, which sounds as if our military authorities were borrowing a leaf from a neighbour's book.

And the air, not less than the sun, is now lending itself to the fairy tales of science under the guidance of men's skilful fingers. Telephones carry sound over atmospheric waves in a wonderful manner, and we are promised a variation on the instrument still more magical. Having received and stored up the vibrations produced by the human voice, this new speaking-trumpet is to be closed up for one or two centuries, say, and then to give forth the words in the very accents which uttered them. Of course our respectfully listening descendants will assume an attitude of earnest attention, just as we should eagerly and humbly bend our ears to pick up a few remarks never spoken before, delivered in the tones of Shakespeare or Milton. After this feat we shall count it but a trifle that the sun consents to take our likenesses, and that the moon even vouchsafes to furnish us with "grimly ghosts" of ourselves.

I fancy we all have more or less of a close personal friendship with the sun and moon. As one proof of this we have applied to them common phrases which belong strictly to human life. We speak of their rising and setting, which mean literally their rising up and their sitting down. The last action is expressed still more familiarly in French by their going to bed; and when the sun rises or goes to bed, what glorious curtains of silver gauze, snowy lawn, and dainty blue, or of gold and crimson and purple stuff, far beyond the robes of the Jewish high priest, he opens or closes before an admiring or an unheeding world!

From our earliest remembrance, when we winked infant eyes before the unmitigated blaze of the sun's light, or clapped baby hands, seated on a mother's knee, ready to hail the mild lustre of the fair round or crescent moon, down to the last time the shutter is unfastened that faded and dim eyes may gaze once more on the faithful attendant of our days and nights, how constant has been the companionship of "the greater and the lesser light"! with how much of our life are they not inextricably interwoven! what endless associations they recall, until it is actually difficult to conceive of an existence consciously and virtually apart from them! It does not matter that we know such may be lived, even in this world, during the days and nights which the sun and moon measure, in the remoter dens of great cities, in cellars and prison cells. These wretched habitations and their annals are so far apart from the mass of us that they do not make much impression on our minds. We still repeat piteously as the very sentence of death—

“ Lay him down, his work is done,
Vain for him is friend or foeman,
Rise of moon or set of sun,
Hand of man or kiss of woman.”

And every true mourner knows the pang of the realization of the great change which has come to pass on the friend he loved best, when he walks out in the sunshine or the moonlight and recognises that sun and moon are no more to his friend, their beams have ceased to fall on the man who was his fellow.



THE MOON.

Perhaps, indeed, after “the human face divine” of bosom friend or nearest kindred, we cling last and most fondly to the sun and moon, and are most loath to part from them and leave them behind us when we go hence on our long journey—be it to the land where they are not needed, because the glory of God shines there, and the Lamb is the light of it.

The sun and moon are so blended with the events of individual lives as to serve the purpose of landmarks both to the men and women themselves and to their neighbours. That

superb summer day when the sun, like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, a giant rejoicing to run his course, was in full sympathy with the gladness and confidence of our untried, unexhausted vigour, and the half-sublime fearlessness of our unmarred joy. That bitter winter night was in keeping with the situation when the pale cold moon looked down on the desire of our eyes lying as pale and cold.

It does not signify though nature is not propitious, and in place of being in unison, is in harsh discord with our lot, the summer sun shining without pity on our misery, and the white face of the winter moon looking down sadly on our happiness. The discord does not make less, but rather greater impression on our imaginations. We continue to connect the most striking objects of outward nature with the great days and marked nights of our lives. The application is so intense that it extends in a degree beyond the principal actors to the more or less concerned spectators. Friends too will recall in turn that it was on just such a brilliant or gloomy day Will, or Tom, or Katie, or Mary, was at the height of his or her ambition and gladness. How foolishly proud and blest the boy or girl was ! It was on just such a wild or tranquil night, with the moon in her last quarter or at her full—for it was half hidden by the night rack, or it was riding in a serene sky—when messengers rode post-haste for the doctor, or ran to the gate to receive the last telegram, and the poor soul was smitten never to lift up the head with the old erect challenge again.

It is so with communities and nations. What battlefields the sun has lit up with ghastly fidelity long before the first Napoleon

delighted in quoting "the sun of Austerlitz"! What mixed and multifarious assemblages—from honourable Houses of Lords and Commons and States-General, to mass meetings and riotous mobs, their members all having, or supposing they have, the good of a country at heart—the moon has silvered shyly, shame-facedly, a trifle pensively, because she is so little noticed and taken account of amidst the flare of artificial sources of illumination!

And the sun, though no longer worshipped even in Persia, is still the chariot of the day, dragging innumerable obligations at its heels, summoning man everywhere to go forth to his work till the evening calls him home. The moon remains a power in all primitive places. She is duly taken into consideration, and little can be done out of doors, for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, without her aid, unless the old times were to come back of "harrying and reiving," when moss-troopers counted on moonless nights to cross the marches, or when Dick Turpin stopped belated travellers between towns. In all lawful occupations and engagements the moon bears her part. She shines on the herring fleets hanging out their nets; she lights the last harvest-carts bringing in the grain; she helps sportsmen to find their way, as they return from the pursuit of the grouse and the deer. The beams which fell solemnly on Jerusalem and Olivet and the intervening garden, at the most awful period of their history, still touch tenderly the remembrance of these hours of agony preserved in the services of the Christian religion. When the Communion is celebrated in far-stretching, thinly-peopled country parishes in

Scotland, and devout worshippers travel many a mile along solitary roads, across moors and arms of the sea, on foot, on shelties, in rough little carts and gigs, and rougher boats, to sit at the tables and in the tent, and linger till the final sonorous "Amen" winds up the last blessing, the moon is invariably called in as a trusty ally.

The moon has come to be identified with certain acts of men, and appropriated by them, until the same moon in different months of the year is styled the harvest moon, when she is supposed to turn a mellower face to the ripe sheaves, and the hunters' moon, when the slight ruddiness has grown paler. In addition there is the honeymoon, which is understood to distil sweetness to young couples in the first weeks of their wedlock.

As a suggestive indication of the moon's being at once homely and far beyond our reach, we have the warning phrase addressed to unreasonably exacting people that they ought not "to cry for the moon." It is significant that though men have bowed down to the sun, as they have kissed their hands to the moon, no one is said familiarly to cry for the sun, which if obtained might, one would think, prove a more available acquisition. But the sun is not only beyond our grasp, it is also, in its blinding, scorching majesty, beyond such craving.

The moon's reign over night and darkness may account for the fact that more superstitions, with the shadowy remnant of idolatrous practices, cling to it than to the sun. To see the new moon for the first time through a pane of glass is held unlucky in Devonshire. A more universal belief established the good fortune of hailing the new moon with money in your

pocket. It is more difficult to account for the strong presumption that it was advisable to turn the money there and then. The writer as a child was called upon, by the example of another child, to curtsy and kiss her hand to "Lady Moon" as a becoming and necessary piece of play, in a way, incumbent on them.

There are several exceptions to the love, free from terror, which the moon has always excited in man. One is the old exploded theory that the moon had a subtle connection with madness, and exercised a sinister influence over the insane, whose paroxysms were most violent when the moon was at the full. Another rejected notion was the potent effect which the light of the moon had on all baleful herbs and noxious or hideous sources from which witches concocted their charms and spells. With regard to the origin of the first opinion, a slight explanation may exist in the exceptional physical sensations which moonlight causes to some persons of highly-strung nervous organization. These people, of all others generally the most alive to the beauty of moonlight, are said to feel faint and even sick when exposed for any length of time to an influence which appears to be purely benignant to the world at large.

As an example of personification which when employed to inanimate nature is more frequently grotesque than tender, those volcanic mountains which show blue lines in the middle of the mild white radiance they send forth, have been conjured into a likeness to the features of a human face. Thus we have the man-in-the-moon, who though children are occasionally threatened with his vengeance, naturally merges into a jolly comic man, and figures tipsily on the signboards of

country inns or in the jocose signature of numerous letters in the public interest. Occasionally the jocoseness and humour have become fierce and sardonic, and the man-in-the-moon has grown scurrilous and savage as a Whiteboy or a Rebecca rioter. Unmistakably there are two sides to the moon in more senses than one, though the reverse side is, as a rule, rather sorrowful than wrathful. The contrary view is persistently joyous, and dwells with suspicious reiteration on the "merry" moonlight, an adjective which does not correspond well with a still and silent fair world. The whole expression sounds a little as if it were usual to stifle reflection and drown care in those minds not mature enough, or not in themselves capable of recognising divinity in sorrow.

We have most of us heard the picturesque old phrase, "The young moon with the old moon in her arms," and many of us have seen the singular phenomenon which is quoted as a disastrous omen in the fine ballad of Sir Patrick Spens. There is little wonder that simple unlettered folk shrank from the spectral appearance of the dim old moon within the two sharp bright horns of the young moon, and considered that it boded calamity to those who witnessed the strange spectacle.

Another equally correct prognostication of misfortune, so long as it is confined to the weather, is found in the misty halo or "bruch" which often surrounds the moon, even when she is walking in a clear pathway unimpeded by clouds. A red or coppery moon is a third sign of storms.

We had better leave untouched the vexed question whether the changes of the moon influence the weather, as they cause

the tides. Men were once thoroughly persuaded that the moon had a good deal to say to the weather, and country-people, who ought to have some knowledge of the subject, believe, like their fathers, stoutly still. But scientific records are so far against the belief, which is yet founded on habitual observation.

When we turn to the stars we find men were so convinced these heavenly bodies were in sympathy with the star-gazers that they founded the science (?) of astrology, which professed to expound the manner in which the stars ruled over human destinies, and to tell men's fortunes by the stars, according to their ascendancy in the sky and their relation to each other at the hour and moment when children were born. But in spite of the survival of Zadkiel's Almanac, which still undertakes to teach what is to come in history by the courses of the stars, it is men and women who transfer their individualities and the chief events of their lives to the stars, and shape the motions of the last to agree with what has happened in the first. Among the constellations and planets "Charley's Wain" was named by farming folk, and spoke to them of one of the implements of their daily toil.

"Orion, the mighty hunter," with his sword and belt, is the sign of the Esau, the restless, adventurous slayer of beasts, as distinguished from the peaceful shepherd Jacob.

The term "the Seven Sisters" survives as a relic of the poetic nation, which loved to figure to itself idealized mystic maidens endowed with gifts far beyond those of mortal maidens, and called them "Hesperides," "Muses," "Graces."

The Southern Cross is the missionary constellation which

the first pioneer of Christianity, sailing in the southern seas, hailed with awe and rapture.

The planets are each, one after another, the symbol of the messenger between heaven and earth ; the man of war, before whose conquering valour his fellows bow ; the fair woman, whose captivations make many slaves ; the mighty potentate, the sovereign ruler of other lords ; and so on to the end of the system.

The evening and morning star is the signal of the gloaming, the season set aside for rest, recreation, meditation, the eagerly craved meeting after the day's work is done, and it is the first household lamp lit at dawn to call the world to the labours of a new day.

The Polar star has a modern pathetic story for us. It is the star which the negro slaves till lately followed in faith, when they had escaped from their taskmasters, and believed without doubting if the fugitives could but keep ahead of the pursuers with their horses and dogs, and press on through cane-breaks and rice-fields and jungle, long enough and far enough after that glittering talisman of hope, the slave would reach the land of the free.

The Dog-star is at the bottom of an odd credulous blunder. Because our sun at midsummer enters a constellation "Canis," and what should be the hot season is called the dog-days, our dogs are reputed to be then specially liable to madness, and we are bidden beware of hydrophobia. Whereas it is well known that as many dogs go mad in winter as in summer, so that the constellation christened in their honour has no more to do



THE SKY AND MILKY WAY.

with canine madness than the moon is related in anything, save the name, to lunacy.

It appears better to avoid endless quotations, though I have sought to chronicle some of the pithy saws which give the popular version of the close connection incessantly acting and reacting between man and nature. But it is difficult to write of the starry sky and omit a reference to the passage in which Lorenzo and Jessica—too selfish and unscrupulous a couple, one would have thought, to be much alive to such an influence—bandy apt comparisons of the Venetian night, and speak of the stars as

“Patines of bright gold.”

Shakespeare, who was, it is needless to say, a close observer of nature, has many fine descriptions of the night-sky, but none finer than this.

Blanco White in his famous ode draws a glorious analogy between night and death, and asks if day conceals from us the starry sphere which requires night for its revelation, why may not life hide as noble a beauty which only death can unveil?

The myth with regard to a shooting star or meteor is that if the gazer can frame a wish with sufficient rapidity before the star reaches the earth, the desire will be granted.

The seasons and the very months and days have personalities and personal references. The summer is Flora with her wreath of flowers, the autumn Pomona bountiful with fruit. April has its “fools.” May is held unlucky for weddings—in the first place, because the month was dedicated to the Virgin Mary; in the second, because in this month Mary Queen of Scots

accomplished her ruin by her ill-fated marriage with Bothwell, following hard on the murder of her first husband, Darnley, in the previous February. The first month of summer has also a melancholy pre-eminence for its trying effect on the health of the weak and sickly. A popular saying declares, "If you climb the hill of May, you may go the whole year round." Another asserts—

"March will seek and April try,
And May will tell whether you'll live or die."

July and August bear in their names a remote memory of Julius and Augustus Cæsar. December has its old heathen festivity of Yule, converted to Christian purposes, and bidding us celebrate the birth of Christ.

Sunday conveys a faint echo of the worship of the sun,* Monday of that of the moon, while the remaining days of the week, with the exception of the last, prove that we are of Scandinavian descent, and have not forgotten the gods of Asgard.

There is an old north country rhyme which records the varying fortunes of the children born on each day of the week:—

"Monday's bairn is fair of face ;
Tuesday's bairn is a bairn of grace ;
Wednesday's bairn is generous and giving ;
Thursday's bairn works hard for its living ;
Friday's bairn is a bairn of woe ;
Saturday's bairn has far to go ;
But the bairn that is born on the Sabbath-day
Is bonny and lucky, and wise and gay."

* George Herbert makes it the sun of days.

CHAPTER II.

On the Mountains, Hills, and Moors.

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ON THE MOUNTAINS, HILLS, AND MOORS.



HERE are few mountains out of the great South American range which the foot of man has not scaled, and to which he has not given a name—whether of reverence or love or terror, or in mere familiar jesting. Thus we have Mont Blanc, the White Mountain; the Jungfrau, the Virgin; Schellion, the Fairy Queen; Mont Pilatus, the Mountain of the Traitor; Finsterhorn, the Peak of Darkness; the Cobbler, and Argyle's Bowling-Green. Each of these, with all "the little hills" and the tablelands of the purple or the golden moors, as the heather or the furze prevails, are scored all over with men and women's handwriting. They are the scenes of legends and tales innumerable—of this chamois-hunter, or that deer-slayer and his deeds; of belated travellers perishing in the snow or the mist; of persecuted men and women fleeing to "No-Man's Country" as to a desperate refuge; of the child carried off by the mother eagle to feed her ravenous brood; of the hero or the lover's leap across the yawning chasm; of the Rest-and-Be-Thankful, where tired wayfarers have found a seat, and, as it were, raised an Ebenezer, by noting and naming it for the

weary brethren and sisters coming behind them ; of the Horseman's Well, where the coldest of mountain springs yet bubbles out among the moss as on the day when the Hanoverian trooper was shot down where he drank ; of the seers' graves under solitary birch or fir trees waving over bracken-crowned mounds in desolate passes.

Naturally I know best the human handwriting on my native mountains and moors, and I am so far prejudiced in its favour as to believe that there is not a great deal of such handwriting which can surpass it in variety, power, pathos, and humour.

Let us take one or two Scotch mountains and moors—not necessarily the highest and most extensive—look at them, and read a few of their messages.

Ben Ledi is the Hill of Fire, because from pagan times a huge bonfire was lit on its summit on Midsummer Eve, which in the Christian calendar becoming the Eve of St. John, dovetailed excellently with the heathen practice, since St. John was “a burning and a shining light,” so that the old brands could flame in his honour as well as in compliment to St. Anthony and St. Vitus, whose plagues of unsightly and troublesome diseases a visit to the Hill of Fire at the appointed season was believed to cure.

Ben Ledi stands among grand, picturesque, and, if we may use the expression, fancifully beautiful scenery, where Perthshire and Stirlingshire meet. It commands close at hand the Pass of Leny, towers over the windings of the Teith, and over Lochs Achray, Vennachar, and Katrine, amidst what was once the broken, tangled, lovely wilderness of the Trossachs. It is not

Ben Ledi's fault that the genius of Sir Walter Scott has so translated its language as to make it come home to the hearts of thousands, and has brought hordes of tourists from the land of Cockaigne and more distant territories to see for themselves the mighty Ben and the silver waters, and to smell the gale and the peat reek. Unfortunately they also talk, or, if you will, gabble, themselves hoarse about the imaginary men and women with whom a true poet in his line has for ever peopled the landscape—the bold chief Roderick Dhu, the royal knight Fitz-James, the loyal maiden Ellen, the gallant lover Malcolm Græme, the banished Douglas. But though fastidious or supercilious people may shrink from the swarms of sightseers, the castellated hotels, the stagey boatmen—products with which Sir Walter, all unaware of the mischief he was doing, furnished the once lovely lochan, to which in his day part of the descent was made by the most primitive of crazy rope ladders—still it is surely well, even at the expense of finer feelings, that the multitude should have their share of the world's beauty. Ben Ledi, at least, does not mind the invasion. He stands as firm as if he were Craigellachie's self, unchanged, unmoved since he was the haunt of cateran alone. You may see his twin peaks and his seamed sides—the grey rock peeping through here, the treacherous morass emerald green there; the last winter's snow yet lying white in yon gully; purple after sunset, a delicate lilac in the light of morning, black in an impending thunderstorm; with his head swathed in mist, which rolls off and leaves his brow bare as the mantle parts on his breast and falls from his shoulders; clear cut, with every jagged pinnacle

and rounded hummock, every crevice exposed under the glare of the noonday sun, or when the frost is abroad in the land.

Over the sheep-tracks and deer-paths which scale the spurs and penetrate into the clefts of Ben Ledi fleet feet and steady hands and heads, unturned by the beetling brows of frowning precipices and the deep-set eyes of sullen tarns, carried the Fiery Cross with its tapering flame, half slaked in blood, which summoned the clans to their muster-place. Have we not all sped with brave Norman when he left his bonny bride at the kirk door, and with Duncan's heir when he sprang from his place at the head of his father's bier?

Down the side and round the base of Ben Ledi pushed many a faithful Stewart and Macdonald with the white cockade in their bonnets or the white rose in their breasts to follow Prince Charlie. What did it matter to these simple stanch mountaineers that his fathers had sinned against the liberties of their subjects, and the son had come back, having learned nothing and forgotten nothing? He was the royal Stewart all the same, the chief of their chiefs, and so in a manner irresponsible. Nothing was too good for him, he could commit no unpardonable sin, and so these unreasoning, one-ideaed children of the Gael went unhesitatingly to their doom, and fell at Preston, left their bones to whiten on Carlisle yetts, were butchered at Culloden, or escaped beyond the seas to pine in French garrets or die foreign mercenaries, dreaming of the free hillsides and the home faces of the north.

All is long past, both the era and types of that which never was, and only lived in the fertile brain and on the busy

pen of the great romancist, and the actual unfortunate rebellion with its too true heroic and piteous tragedies. But they are preserved, as long as Ben Ledi stands, in literature and history, carved as with a graven tool on the mountain.

Within a bird's flight of Ben Ledi is Balquhiddy, Rob Roy's country. There the proscribed clan, in punishment of cruelties committed on their neighbours the Colquhouns, were forbidden to use their name; there poor Helen Macgregor, mad with wrong and shame, wreaked her revenge; there Rob, frankest and most hospitable of thieves, not even excepting Robin Hood, is supposed to have entertained Francis Osbaldistone; there "the Dugald creatur" flourished in his own habitat; there the graves of the wild race are to be seen on a quiet summer afternoon, with the stillness unbroken save by the stir of the bracken or the whir of a moor-cock.

Besides the black-mail which Highland freebooters levied regularly, they were prone on occasions to appropriate another description of spoil which, so far as I am aware, was unknown to the southern outlaw. Not content with gallantly providing "plenishing" for the houses to which these gentlemen proposed to bring brides, they "lifted" the brides themselves according to the fancy of the moment. Bursting into a sleeping Lowland house between nightfall and cock-crow, the invader who happened to be in lack of a wife cast a critical eye on the terrified women huddled together in the farthest corner, made up his mind in the twinkling of an eye, and without so much as asking by her leave seized the lass, shrieking with terror, dumb with rage, or fainting in despair,

who impressed him as the bonniest or the most "strapping," dragged her out, and mounted her on what was, perhaps, the only horse in the walking party, and led her off on a long and fatiguing journey, which was also likely to prove a life journey, as his particular prey. Strange as it may sound, a trustworthy chronicler was solemnly assured by his own grandmother, one of these kidnapped brides, that the marriages thus unceremoniously brought about were, as a rule, by no means unhappy examples of wedlock. The practice might have continued to this day, and saved a great deal of trouble and expense, had it not been for an unfortunate experiment of the kind attempted by a son of the redoubtable Rob himself. The poor young widow thus carried away was, by an unlucky coincidence, a woman of substance, and so beyond reason peevish and refractory, to the extent of dying in the hands of her captor. Thus Robin Oig suffered the extreme penalty of hanging for an exploit which, no doubt, his sorrowing clansmen regarded as a pretty little effort to better himself, most pardonable in the circumstances.

We do not know if there is any British mountain or hill which bears the name of our first ancestor, like "Adam's Peak," Ceylon, but away among the pastoral hills of Peeblesshire there is a pass the title of which has a grotesque reference to a daughter of Eve. It is called "Jean Jack's Halse" (neck).

The deep ravines of Killiecrankie and Glencoe present on a smaller scale not only the striking features, but some of the dramatic incidents of the great mountain passes of Switzerland. If the forces of the French marshal Macdonald and the

Russian general Suwarrow grappled together among the savage horrors of the last, Mackay and Dundee, the Campbells and the Highland Macdonalds, endured the tug of war and the



ADAM'S PEAK, CEYLON.

despair of a betrayed and annihilated clan among the bleak fastnesses of the first.

Round the Lake Country of Cumberland and Westmoreland a ring of sentries of mountains keep guard. The landscape is distinguished from those portions of the Highlands of

Scotland which resemble it most by greater softness and greenness, less wildness and desolation. There is a frequent luxuriance about the coppice-wood to which Scotch eyes are largely unaccustomed. The fond lines—

“ The oak and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
Oh ! they flourish best in the north countrie,”



GALLERY OF ISSEL, MOUNT SIMPLON, SWITZERLAND.

refer to the north of England, not to Scotland, which is not famous for oaks, unless in Auchtertyre, and where ivy and holly bushes, though the first are abundant out of the Hebrides and the second are not very rare, do not revel in such a wealth of dark greenery as may be seen but not easily penetrated, when they help to clothe what would otherwise be the bareness of Cumberland and Westmoreland dales. The contrast, when it

occurs, between the full foliage and the bleak hillsides has a charm of its own. Thus the greener, more embowered, and surely more song-bird haunted Lake Country is able to hold



MOUNTAIN PASS, NEAR GONDO, MOUNT SIMPLON, SWITZERLAND.

up its head beside the bolder, sterner Scotch Highlands. Possibly it is not without a certain propriety in the fact that a row at sunset or by moonlight on Windermere, and a drive up the Vale of St. John, are the gentle pleasures of those honeymoon couples that abound at the English lakes. These brief

dwellers in a happy trance, when every light is rose colour, might, in spite of Mr. Black's novels, be more thoroughly repelled than even the great Dr. Johnson was affronted, when he crossed the Grampians, by the roaring surge of the Atlantic and the savage gruesomeness of Glencoe. Say what you will, there is a clashing discord between the height of soft human bliss and wild, stern scenery.

We may be sure that Skiddaw, Scafell, Helvellyn, and Langdales Pikes are no more without their handwriting than are Ben Ledi or Ben Lomond, the Lammermoors or the Ochils, while each writing is distinct and different. Yet it has a character in common which it would bear even among the Alps and the Pyrenees, because it is the stenography of mountain countries, the striking indelible traditions of mountain races. But one record of the north of England is more peculiar to the locality. It is that of its group of poets. Other countries may match its Christopher North—the man in his strength who thought little, when he had forgotten some fishing-tackle, of recrossing and crossing yet again the hillside which taxed the lungs of an able-bodied dalesman. Even his regattas and bull-baiting may be easily equalled, though his whimsical devotion in driving the north country beauty, Miss Jane Penny, his future wife, before he had procured an introduction to her, for a whole day in the humble disguise of a coachman, who held the chaise door open for the lady at every inn on the road, is rather more difficult of parallel. But where shall we find such another group as that which was made up of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey? names that have rendered every foot of the Lake Country classic

English ground, and made the homely houses of Rydal Mount and Greta Hall, and above all the little God's acre of Grasmere Churchyard, immortal! Fashions may rise and fall unaccountably; William Wordsworth may be slighted, exalted to the sky, and pulled down again to a much lower level; Coleridge may be revered and abused; Southey may be respected and



RYDAL MOUNT.

patted on the back, but it will be strange indeed if English students ever lose sight of the "Ode to Immortality" and the "Ancient Mariner," or English sailors, English Nonconformists, and English children, of the Lives of Nelson and Wesley, the "Inchcape Bell" and the "Battle of Blenheim." Other well-known names cluster round the central figures, notable among them Thomas Arnold at Fox How, and Harriet Martineau at

Ambleside. However, large-hearted and influential as the man and woman were, these two in literature "attained not to the first three." A more significant figure, one more in keeping with the Lake Poets, was the little agonized body which held the keenly intellectual, marvellously generous, learning-burdened soul of Thomas de Quincey. The Lake giants would not have been what they were without the pigmy in physique and Titan in spirit. One of the noblest, most stirring tales of the storied district is De Quincey's account of the brave dale children, snowed up in the absence of their father and mother, making a good fight against the terrible war of the elements, and the more terrible loneliness and threatened starvation.

Centuries earlier the peasant peer, Lord Clifford, lived and died among these mountains. When his father was slain in one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses his widowed mother, trembling for the infant son and heir, exposed alike to the pitiless hostility of feudal enemies and the fierce ambition of rival kinsmen, hid the child among the peasants of one of the dales, and let him grow up to manhood, so far as he knew, a peasant like one of Shakespeare's exiled princes. It might be that in her despair she was tempted to hope the time would never come for him to recognise his rank, and claim his title and estates, and she would rather have had him live and die, safe if obscure, as a labouring man. But it was not to be so. And the peasant peer, who was right noble under his clownishness, and as a natural consequence, right humble in his own estimation, felt his uncouthness among courtiers and retired to his own domain, where he pursued that science of the stars

which had not been too high for him when he kept his master's flock, any more than it had been for the Chaldean shepherds.

Of the good Lord Clifford came Queen Elizabeth's great sea captain and that "Anne Clifford, Dorset, Montgomery," who not only piled up her husbands and titles, but let her glib tongue wag, unabashed, on all topics small and great from sleet to predestination.

Another noble astrologer, not far removed either in time or place, was "Belted Will" the Howard, who wore the signs of the Zodiac engraved on his belt. His ancient keep of Naworth has survived both flood and fire. Belted Will had more to do than simply look at the stars and calculate nativities. He was a Lord Warden of the Marches, for his was the debatable Border land which witnessed many an unwarrantable incursion and reprisal, after the moss-troopers had been treated to a dish of spurs as a polite hint from their wives that the bread-winners ought to take a moonless ride and refill the larders. Scotch and English blood was poured forth like water in these dales. Chevy Chase, where

"The dead Douglas won the field,"

lies in the shadow of these mountains. The field of Flodden, where the bravest and most infatuated of the gentle King Jamies fell, the centre of the noble knightly ring which encircled him, is within sight of the blue wavy line. Across these wilds rode the solitary man who bore back to Edinburgh its banner of the Blue Blanket, wrought by the hands of the Danish-born queen.

Among the family histories of the district is the story of "The Luck of Edin Hall"—the theme of many a ballad, including a well-known German lyric. The magic crystal goblet is not yet forgotten. Still the tale goes round how the rough squires, forewarned of the cost of its destruction, preserved the cup with religious care till the wicked Musgrave came to accomplish the prophecy. In a fit of reckless drunken defiance he is said to have dashed the "luck" of his race in shivers at his feet, and the same night perished in the flames of his house.

But the tragical fate of the Musgraves has only been fulfilled in ballads. The crystal goblet is said to have been found by a butler with a strange taste for early rising. He picked up the cup on the dewy greensward, where it had been left by the fairies. The perilous treasure has been carefully kept, and was only once seriously threatened by the heedlessness of Duke Wharton.

Leaving untold many a legend of the great mountains, I shall pass on to some of the little hills.

The Cartland Crag of Lanarkshire were the refuge of the gallant outlaw Wallace when he gathered to his side all the discontented patriots of Scotland, and prepared to dispute the possession of the country with the powerful English king Edward Longshanks. Blind Harry's hero has left many a mark behind him. There are "Wallace's Leaps" from rock to rock in more than one county. But I wish to speak of some of the sunny, lovable low-country "laws," which seem more like private than national property. They too are not without their annals, their prophecies, their weather-saws,

Under the eaves, as it were, of Largo Law, in Fifeshire, the ancient mariner Alexander Selkirk was wont to stalk about his native village, when he made a brief stay among what may be classed as polite society, after his eerie solitude in Juan Fernandez, before he set sail again, to vanish, like Jason or any other Argonaut, in strange seas.

In the hollow beneath Kelly Law the pressgang, in the days when George III. was King, swooped down on their victims. The frigate's men were not content with legally boarding the "whalers" sailing with the garlands at their mast-heads, triumphing in their safe return from the ice-bound coasts of Newfoundland, the men bringing out of their lockers simple gifts of feathers and shells, dried flowers and skins, and living penguins for the bairns, with full purses for the wives. If the weather-worn vessel had timely intimation, and ran into another harbour to avoid a search and an imprisonment of able-bodied lads and men, with a long banishment instead of a glad welcome home, the King's ship stood on shore and landed a crew under cloud of night. These invaders tracked the newly-returned wanderers, stealing, sometimes disguised in women's clothes, by devious byways, to their mothers, wives, and children. An act of felony, never too narrowly inquired into, was committed in the name of the King and on the authority of the Government. The foes grappled together in the dark lanes, under the shadow of the kirkyard wall, in an old world public-house to which all the sailors in the little town resorted, on the very thresholds of the cottages. These scenes have been preserved with dramatic

fidelity and vividness, and great grace and tenderness, by a living writer, so that the great world *has* heard of Kelly Law and Kelly Mill.

Wise Thomas, the fluent speaker of oracular sayings and apt rhymes, as well as the favoured swain of the Fairy Queen, issued the announcement that when the trumpet sounded and the white bull fed on Largo Law, a gold mine should be found there. The nearest fulfilment of the prediction which has yet come to pass happened when a family of the name of Gould tenanted a farm at the foot of the Law, for it is probable that the yeomanry were called out during the Goulds' lease, and that more than one white bull figured among the herds of cattle accustomed to graze on the hill.

Largo Law and Kelly Law serve as barometers to a whole country-side, delivering opposite verdicts, which are still always in harmony with the weather and with truth. The quaint verse has it—

“ When Largo Law puts on its hat,
Kelly Law may look to that ;
When Kelly Law puts on its hat,
Largo Law may laugh at that.”

And sure enough when the higher, more westerly green law, behind which the sun sets over Largo Bay, is half hidden by clouds, and Strathairlie lies in gloom, the signal is the certain precursor of rain—not a sunny shower, but a drenching day. On the other hand, when the lower, more easterly law veils its crest it is as likely as not that nothing will come of it—the sun will be shining as brightly above Pittenweem and the two

Ansters, the whole horizon will be as clear as ever, in the course of an hour.

Across the Firth of Forth North Berwick Law guards the watery highway. Outward-bound ships still ride by it as when Burns watched the parting of the Peninsular officer and his plighted wife on "the pier o' Leith." Under the shoulder of the Law moulders away the huge pile of Tantallon, a hold like a fortress, which belonged to the Douglas, and echoed the mailed footsteps of the renowned and formidable Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

On Tinto or Tinnock, where the moors of Lanark meet the moors of Dumfriesshire, a merry song proposes that the lass with "the penny siller" shall be set, adding sardonically, "The wind will blaw a man till her."

These laws form local and, as it were, family standpoints. They are not so much of historical as of biographical interest. To climb them is not the feat of a lifetime to all save regular mountaineers. They may be visited by their near neighbours at all seasons, even before breakfast, while the visits are unassociated either with adventure or peril. The laws are the scene of innumerable picnics in which children and old people join. Still the little hills have a character and power of their own, and serve as landmarks of the districts, those landmarks which always rise first in the mirror of memory, on which the thoughts and affections of the exile seize as he pines for his native country and forsaken home, though the last may be a desolate ruin or occupied by strangers.

From these laws is attained *the* "prospect" of the neighbour

hood, which takes in all its parishes, church spires, stately mansions, and thatched roofs ; its streams, its separate fields—wellnigh its poppies and ox-eyed daisies. These more or less soft Lowland laws are green in summer and winter to their rounded summits. They may look white, or blue, or brown in cold winter or spring mornings and evenings, but every “glint” of sunshine that lights them up with yellow radiance brings out the mellow green of the grass, which sheep nibble for many months out of the twelve.

The bogs of Ireland, the southern moors of England, and the moors and mosses of Scotland have each, in relation to the other, an individual character. The turf-bogs of Ireland bear no doubt a considerable resemblance to the “peat-hags” of Scotland, even as they afford inexhaustible supplies of the same primitive material for fuel. But if the brown or blue green expanse, with the frequently quaking footing, the downy white seed of the cotton grass, the dense white flower of the grass of Parnassus, the yellow iris, and the purple orchis are similar, the horizon is generally widely different, while the annals of the two places are foreign to each other. There is only one point of union in the handwriting on Irish and Scotch mosses. They shared equally in their day in the illicit distilling of whiskey. It was largely practised by sets of hardy, lawless men, who gave to their forbidden spirit the jesting name of “mountain-dew.” The extent to which the unlicensed distillation was carried on, in Ireland especially, may be gathered from the fact that there were regimental quarters where the soldiers’ chief duty was to hunt out and put down these secret stills. But

the Irish bogs have other tales of banshees and fairies, and dark-eyed Galway maidens with the blood of Spain in their veins, and wearing the flannel or cloth mantles borrowed from Flanders. We hear of wonderful pipers, almost as gifted as the piper of Hamelin, who played and joked and carried treason from parish to parish; of hedge priests who were wandering scholars maintained by the settled community, whether these *protégés* of the public were models of learning in a humble walk and of single-minded devotion, or were Friar Tucks of the least edifying description. We retain visions of misled French officers in sorry disguises, and of hapless followers of poor Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, desperate men fain to die for "the wearing of the green" and the singing of the "Shan-van-Voght." We remember White-boys worked up to a cruel frenzy, ready to lurk behind a hedge and shoot any Orange landlord or tenant to the heart without mercy. We have heard many a time of "rale ould Irish gentlemen," descendants of Milesian kings, who kept open house, hunted, shot, played cards, and flung their children's bread to the dogs; and of inimitable Paddies, picturesque, genial, comical in rags and wretchedness, with a rich brogue and a capacity for repartee that no misfortunes could destroy; and of famine and fever-stricken creatures dying in pathetic silence and patience in their empty cabins. All these allusions, and many more, merry, exasperating, piteous, tragic, belong by right to the wild, free, dreary Irish bogs, with or without grand mountain backgrounds.

An English moor, especially if it is not in the north or the

south, in Cumberland or Yorkshire, or in Devon or Cornwall, is tame by comparison, yet it is the wild moor still, often a relic of an ancient forest, and the resort of such gipsies as are left in the country. Occasionally to this day, even in our populous, comparatively prosperous England, with our close network of rigidly enforced laws and our ubiquitous guardian angels in the shape of rural police, such a moor is the scene of acts of depredation and violence. On the whole, however, these belong to a former generation, and to a whole century back, as the inscription-posts which have replaced the gibbets and rattling chains of an earlier era testify. Such a post, like the crosses in some foreign countries, still marks the spot where a brutal murder was committed in the reign of George III. on a moor in Surrey, within a short morning's journey of London, and not far from the home of a great poet who has been reproached by the hypercritical with showing himself too soft, polished, and domestic in his verses, yet who has written the "Northern Farmer" and "Rizpah." The victim of this crime was not the traditional pedlar, but a forlorn sailor.

In some respects these English moors are more impassable than the Scotch moors, for the very superiority of the soil and climate results in a high lush growth of matted-together brambles, bracken, and heather, which may serve as a fine covert for wild creatures, but through which men must force their way. The bleak Scotch moors, with their low bushes of heather, separate tufts of bracken, broom "cows," whins, and here and there solitary fir-trees, are easy of access by comparison.

The difference recalls the sorrowful truth that the human nature which is conquered by evil, in spite of its own rich promise and ample capacity for good, becomes often doubly bad. The shaggy growth of English moors has frequently been burst asunder and trodden down by eager feet, when the ground has been made the chosen rendezvous in national or local rebellions and tumults like those of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, and of popular preachings as when the Wesleys and Whitfield, following the example of their Master, taught the multitude in the wilderness.

There is one Scotch moor near Forres which has a blasted, weird look of its own, well suited to the lurid, fantastic horror of the meeting which Shakespeare ordained to take place there between Macbeth and the witches.

There are other Scotch moors with gentler though still sad associations. What are the "dowie dens o' Yarrow," where the two knights who had quarrelled over their "lawin'" (tavern fee) fought the disastrous duel, and where "Willie" was drowned in Yarrow Water, save one great stretch of billowy moor? Still more closely intertwined with Scotch history and the deeper chords in Scotch natures are the moor where Claverhouse and his dragoons shot down, at his own cottage door, Brown the Covenanting carrier, whose wife took his dead head in her lap and sat, like Rizpah of old, with her woful burden through the dark hours, till the pale morning light broke and brought trembling, indignant neighbours—and Airds Moss, which was the last refuge of the Whigs when they were surprised by the enemy, and where Richard Cameron, the great preacher and founder

of a sect, was slain. His grave, with its symbols of a Bible and a sword, is still to be seen, with the humble-bee droning and the curlew sweeping over it in the solemn solitude. But on Magus Muir, in the east "neuk" or corner of the bold little "Kingdom of Fife," these very Covenanters had already perpetrated a barbarous act of revenge. They waylaid and slew in cold blood the aged Archbishop Sharpe of St. Andrews, renegade and persecutor as they held him, and they dragged his innocent unfortunate daughter to the window of the coach to witness her father's violent death.

Where the moors and mosses of England and Scotland open to the sea they mostly assume a softer character, even though they remain barren, exposed to the blast, and without the richness of the coombs of Devonshire, which, however, may be found in a modified form on the east coast itself—at Aberdour, and within the guard of the Sutors of Cromarty. The moors pass into downs and links where the long bent grass has a silvery tone, and grasshoppers chirp, and blue butterflies flutter low over wild thyme and eyebright in June and July. But the downs and links were formerly not altogether free from the wild deeds which belonged to the moors. Downs and links alike constituted the natural resort of smugglers and wreckers. Quantities of ill-gotten goods, kegs of hollands and brandy, bales of silk and lace, were hurried and huddled away unceremoniously in their recesses. Many an exciting chase between coastguardsmen and smugglers has been led over their hillocks and hollows.

There are links which retain the name of moor stretching

between two Scotch river mouths. I can remember a lowly cottage in the middle of these links. It was inhabited by an elderly couple who were supposed to have selfish reasons at the bottom of their taste for solitude. If they were not guilty to the extent of burning deluding lights to lure the vessels on the stormy firth to their destruction, the pair were considered capable of taking an unwarrantable salvage from the seas. They were believed to examine narrowly the sands and rocks after every tide, in order to appropriate to themselves not only whatever driftwood came on shore, but such prizes from wrecked vessels as belonged by right to Lloyd's agents. The man and woman were said first to search and strip of any article of value such drowned corpses as the waves sometimes washed ashore, before the finders gave information of what they had discovered to the authorities. The couple were looked upon with distrustful eyes by their nearest neighbours. Yet the master and mistress of the rough cottage in the waste behaved hospitably enough to summer-afternoon invaders of the moor, boiled their kettles for them, and graciously instructed them where to look for plovers' eggs. During one winter, when a great snow-storm nearly buried the cottage and its occupants, they were shut off for weeks from any intercourse with the nearest little grey town of deathless fame, though its ruined cathedral and castle remained in sight against the heavily-laden or frostily-clear sky. The woman suffered most from the temporary loneliness which intensified the habitual ostracism suffered by the couple. She was fain to make friends of the wild living creatures flocking about the cottage for food, shelter, and

sympathy. She tamed a family of rats. After the thaw came her pets grew troublesome, but she got rid of them by carrying them in her pocket into the town and slyly dispersing them in a quiet street.

Nobler enterprises than those of smuggling and wrecking have their origin in the moors, landward or seaward. What marvels of patient endurance men have achieved in order to reclaim land from the waste and convert it into waving corn-fields or green pastures! All honour to these hardy pioneers of civilization who have worked early and late, like their brethren in the Australian bush or the Canadian backwoods. The reclaimers may have but brought in a few roods of sour clay or barren sand from the tyranny of unproductiveness, while the passing of a new law by men who never bent their shoulders to the plough or handled a spade, the opening up of new ports and freighting of ships from more favoured countries, may in appearance render the hard work worse than useless, and make it even desirable to reduce the laboriously rescued patch of ground to its former worthless condition. But the practice of patient industry, the exercise of faith, courage, and constancy, can never be without fruit. The northern farmer, in his stolid heathenism, was not altogether wrong when he reckoned as the best deed of his coarsely-spent life the winning from the waste that morsel of stiff stones and lime, thistles and thorns, to bear grain and grow grass, and provide a wholesome mouthful of food for hungry men and beasts.

CHAPTER III.

In the Plains and across the Fields.



CHAPTER III.

IN THE PLAINS AND ACROSS THE FIELDS.



O see plains in perfection we must go to Russia and America, where we can look on steppes and prairies vast as the ocean itself, extending like shoreless seas in huge billowy tracts, with their monotony unbroken from north to south, from east to west. But we are not without respectable plains of our own, on a much smaller scale indeed, but not altogether despicable or destitute of the feeling of space and distance, which almost atones for the absence of striking landmarks, and the want of variety in such tame landmarks as exist. Though our plains do not always bear the name, there is one notable exception in Salisbury Plain, which without question has more of an atmosphere of hoary antiquity and high-flown romance than any other level ground—shall we say?—in Great Britain. For it is a great mistake to suppose that lofty associations and heroic memories belong solely to mountain regions. No doubt the imposing, notable peaks of the highlands of all countries have a strong hold on men's imaginations. The mountains monopolize the fascination of gloom and mystery, even on the most serene and cloudless summer day they stand desolate,

and, as the sun declines, fling deep shadows over the adjoining country. In contrast the plains are open to the eye, easy to read, unmistakable in purpose, cheerful in the light. In the poetic language of the Book of Psalms the plains "laugh and sing" as the sombre mountains never do, though the little hills may be softened and moved to "clap their hands." The valleys or plains are clothed in what is in one sense men's handiwork, and studded with men's dwellings. The smoke of towns, the traces of human toil and its wages are on every side. It is a sign, perhaps, of those peculiar faculties and cravings of men which no provision for their ordinary wants ever reaches, that with all the innumerable links between humanity and the plains, the mountains have never been without their inhabitants—mountaineers who have clung with a desperate love and a fond fidelity far exceeding the gratitude experienced by the Lowlander for his fat sunshiny fields and meadows, to the rugged fells which yield no bread and sustain no cattle, nay, that hardly offer a foothold to the hunter. Nobody has ever heard of the Lowlander dying of home-sickness and hopeless longing for the land of his nativity as the Highlander has been prone to do. Still in spite of all, and though we call the mountains "the everlasting hills," the plains too are venerable and abound in interest. When we remember that the great battles of the world have been fought in plains, we can understand they possess one source of dignity and importance which is not that of mere prosaic utility, though when it comes to that, highest use is highest beauty.

That Plain of Salisbury bears in the first place the charmed

and really awe-inspiring circle of Stonehenge, about which antiquaries have quarrelled, and will quarrel till the end of time. It may be that the performances attributed to our Druidical ancestors are largely mythical, and that we find ourselves forced to recognise a considerable amount of fancy in the white-robed, golden-filleted priests and priestesses under the spreading oaks with the mistletoe-crowned altars



DRUIDICAL CIRCLE.

and their human victims. Do what we may to keep up the illusion, the operatic music of Norna may intrude with impertinent importunity and awkward significance on the dreams even of the scholarly. When all is done, these huge mystic grey circles point to a stern vague worship, mournful in its dimness, or to cairns raised to the dead wellnigh as colossal and crushing to the living as the pyramids of Egypt have proved to be.

But Salisbury Plain is also the gigantic Round Table

of Arthur Pendragon's peerless knights. Chivalry has made its chosen home there as in remoter Cornwall. The shades of pure Sir Galahad, sinful, shamed Lancelot, noble Arthur, bold Sir Caradoc, passion-stained, ruined Guinevere, the lily maid Elaine, the fooled enchanter Merlin, the wicked witch Vivian, wander in every wind which sighs among the harebells in the withered bent—just as spirits hover around St. Michael's Mount, with the western waves rippling or dashing without ceasing against the rocks.

The old Fen Country was one great plain which was often more than a third part under water, and included the island of Ely, and many a treacherous marsh, sedgy brake, and reedy pool in Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Hertford, and Essex. Even now where the land is drained and cultivated certain localities still abound in "lodes" and ditches which heavy rains flood to a dangerous extent; so that in some districts the natives continue to use the old warning phrase "the waters are out" to remind the wayfarer that the hollows of the roads are impassable for hours at a time to all save the highest-stepping, surest-footed horses. These parishes remain, in the teeth of railways and of short distances from great towns, the most primitive in their practices, as they are still among the most thinly-peopled in the kingdom.

The wildfowl which once flocked to so natural a resort have long flown before the triumphs of agriculture. The Adullamites, the penniless, outlawed men who were formerly fain to "squat" among the wildfowl and live by gun and rod, have disappeared with their prey. They are replaced by a race of honest

yeoman. But there lingers sufficient evidence of the precautions which the former state of the country demanded in the remnants of moats constantly to be met with in connection with all the older white-plastered or red-gabled farmhouses and rectories, as well as in the formidable towers of the cathedrals and of the great university town which courageously defied the disadvantages and dangers of the situation. The whole of the poetically dreary imagery of "Mariana in the Moated Grange" was borrowed from this corner of England; and when the plain of the fens was in its "bloom" as a land of reeds and rushes and standing pools, it was the last hope of the dispossessed Saxons, with their long mantles and long beards, their churls and fools, Gurths and Wambas. The Saxons continued for more than one reign to make a stand and keep a court and a church at Ely.

In Scotland the term strath instead of the word plain is applied to the great valleys which stretch from east to west. Geologists will have it that these were originally inland seas dividing the northern portion of the island into fragments, and that the course of glaciers is well marked both on the sides of the mountain ranges, which form ribs to the level country, and in the *débris*—above all, the curious craigs and rocks, with one side precipitous and another sloping, which are to be found in the valleys. Such a craig and a rock are to be seen at Stirling, the latter the site on which the castle is built. What a plain or strath is there, bordered by the misty blue Grampians and the green Ochils, with the windings or "links" of the Forth forming a silver chain among the corn-fields, meadows, and

woods at the gazer's feet! Surely Wallace needed no monument within a crow's flight of Bannockburn, where his kingly successor Robert Bruce ended his long struggles and hairbreadth escapes by freeing the country from the English invader, and setting the crown, which the Countess of Buchan had rested on his brow, so many evil years before, firmly on his head.

As unforgotten as "Wallace Wight" or "good King Robert" are the Douglasses "tender and true." They belonged in a sense to Clydeside and not to the links of the Forth, but their terrible and piteous memories are ripe in this strath as in many another. These range from the stories of "gentle Lord James," with his French accomplishments and his ghastly "larder," and of Archibald the Grim, who was believed to have a hand in the murder of poor David of Rothesay, to legends of unhappy Anguses, in their turn insulted, banished, and slaughtered by a royal host.

The people have even room in their treasure-house of traditions for the ruck of gallant and jovial knights who were wont to attend their king to Stirling. Willing cicerones still point to the spots where these somewhat unruly courtiers got rid of their spare energy by "riding the ring" and playing at the homely game of "hurley-hacket" in the sight of fair ladies and for the diversion of themselves and their master.

Many of the fields which are now green with sprouting corn, or "white to harvest," or a red brown under the ploughshare, were once watered with brave men's blood. Near the little village of Battle in Sussex is a duke's mansion constructed out of the fragments of an ancient abbey which was built by the Conqueror

of England, that monks might say masses for the souls of the dead Normans and Saxons who fell in heaps, on the day when William established his title to reign over the land as the monkish king had willed. The guides show how William and his host came over the brow of the hill, where the battle raged hottest in the hollow, and taking you to a ruin in the flower-garden, tell you this was the altar of the Lady's Chapel, and here Harold fell. Within three days he had offered and made good his taunting terms to Harold of Norway, yet to this field of Sanguelac—an ill-omened name—romancists say Editha the Fair came before the third sunset, seeking the body of her hapless lover and king, and pleading for the last boon—that it might receive Christian burial.

On the field of Bosworth, where Henry Duke of Richmond vanquished the wily and cruel Crookback, the crown of England lay for hours hidden in a hawthorn bush.

On another field of the Wars of the Roses a peculiar kind of small red and white rose grew for generations as thickly as if it had been planted and cherished in commemoration of John of Gaunt and Queen Margaret, Guy Earl of Warwick—the “wind-changing” Kingmaker, Edward of York and Elizabeth Woodville, and the boy princes who slept their last sleep in the Tower.

On other fields stout Oliver and his train-bands fought fiery Prince Rupert and his Cavaliers, and Lord Falkland and John Hampden fell.

Far north at Culloden the white rose and white cockade were torn from the Jacobites' breasts and cast into the bloody mire, while the heather was trampled down or pulled up by

the stamp of struggling horses' feet and the clutch of dying men's hands. Lochiel and Keppoch strove like lions as the last hopes of a ruined cause. Lord Boyd crossed from the Hanoverian ranks to cover with his own cap the bare head of his father, Lord Kilmarnock, when he stood a prisoner in the first stage of the expiation which ended on Tower Hill.

On London Fields, after another sort of fight, where men had to contend for many days and nights with the hiss and roar, the solid pyramids or glowing fire breaking into hundreds of tongues of curling flame, the furnace breath, the pall of smoke of a great city which was one vast conflagration, a marvel was seen. In the course of a few weeks, acres of what had been smouldering ruins grew green and yellow with a huge crop of innocent wild mustard, the seed of which must have lain slumbering in the earth for centuries. For it is true that old earth bears in her faithful, fruitful breast endless resources for healing and restoring the wounded maimed world of nature. And it cannot be that God is less kind to the spirits He has created, though He may have to transplant them to the heavenly fields in order to bind up their sore hurts and bid them be glad once more.

These old battlefields, once the scene of such strife and misery, are now peaceful, rich, and fair, abounding in work, food, and pleasure for the children's children of the men and women who suffered there. Wheat and barley, meadow grass, turnips and potatoes—does any one suppose that the handwriting of men and women is not seen among "the kindly

fruits of the earth"? The grains which grow nowhere wild and yet flourish in every climate under man's cultivation, are a standing miracle for his benefit with which he is for ever connected. In the parable the sower is the Lord, the reapers are the angels, the harvest is the end of the world. Again, the springing corn is the resurrection from the dead.

Everyday human life, with the tales and songs of the people, is closely interwoven with the ordinary operations of nature. Schiller's Bell was not more intimately associated with feasts and fasts, births, bridals, and deaths, than are the homely fields and their common productions with all human experience. Some of the humble dwellers in cities may have the misfortune never to have seen the fields, or looked on at sheep-shearing and corn-cutting, but their luckier progenitors and contemporaries have told the waifs of the strength and satisfaction bound up with the country, so that the most ignorant—wellnigh the most depraved, hanker at times after the natural solace which has been, alas! denied to them. The simple incident of a little child repudiated by a harsh grandfather, tottering to its feet among his bountiful sheaves, holding up the hat crowned with the flowers of the old man's cherished fields, and softening the hard heart by the innocent offering, has brought down rounds of applause from the crowded audience in a great city theatre. To "go a-hopping" down into the wooded vales of Kent and Sussex is the one great gala of the most wretched inhabitants of the East End of London. City hospitals are made sweet in spring and summer by gifts of flowers, often brought from a considerable distance to brighten

the wards ; and the givers are told no garden flowers are so welcome as the flowers of the fields.

Among the meadow grasses are French and Dutch varieties, the saintfoin and the Dutch clover. These bring whispers of the poplars of the Seine and the vines of Burgundy, of Jean Crapaud with his mad deeds in the great Revolution, his gallant endurance of adversity, his wonderful retrieval of loss ; and of the canals and sea-dikes of Brabant and Guelderland, of Mynheer Van Dunk, with his brave resistance to the Spaniard and his diligent trade in foreign seas.

Potatoes ought to have been the badge of brilliant, restless Sir Walter Raleigh, who introduced the plant in one form into Ireland.

Turnips supplied a nickname for good old King George III., whom men, not half so worthy, styled in derision of his domesticity, his love of farming, and his dulness, "Turnip George."

One of the pleasantest field-paths I have ever known was a "right of way" running in a simple foot-track up hill and down dale, past farm and mill, village and village church, through many miles of corn, clover, and pasture. Its privileged preservation had a quaint origin. It was of little use in modern days, save to children, day-labourers, and an occasional pair of lovers, but it was the same ancient footpath by which the strong, half-masculine fishwives—the Maggie Mucklebuckets of the coast—had trudged, carrying creels or baskets of fresh fish on their backs for the royal table, in the remote times when kings and queens dwelt in the "landward" Palace of Falkland.

In some parts of the country chicory is grown, and sometimes we may see a crowd of workers in the fields hoeing it. It has a root like a parsnip, in shape it is like a lettuce, and it bears a pretty blue flower. No doubt we have often drunk its ground root in our coffee. Grocers nowadays, under the Adulteration Act—a very right and proper Act too—are prohibited from selling coffee and chicory mixed unless their customers are informed of the fact by a label placed on the package. In Germany there are women who are so fond of chicory that they are called “chicory-topers.” It makes the coffee darker and more bitter, and has cultivated a taste to meet which coffee-berries are injured through being over-roasted. Even in France, the country of so-called pure coffee, millions of pounds of roasted chicory-root are used up every year. On the Continent chicory is often used for salad; and it is also raised for feeding sheep and cattle. One great advantage of chicory is that it will grow on almost any soil. Although so juicy, it thrives in sand. Mustard is a kindred spirit, which is often self-sown. It is called Durham mustard, because it was at Durham that the mustard-meal was first turned out pure yellow. When mustard has once been sown on a farm it sticks to it, like the Scotchman who told the laird that if he did not know when he had got a good servant, *he* knew when he had got a good master.



CHICORY.

CHAPTER IV.

**Along the Rivers and Lochs, and by the
Brooks.**

CHAPTER IV.

ALONG THE RIVERS AND LOCHS, AND BY THE BROOKS.



WHEN whole books have been written on the scenery of a single river it seems a hard, if not a hopeless, undertaking to compress the annals of five or six, with lochs and brooks besides, into one chapter. Certainly it is merely in their human light that we have to do with them, but even with that limitation the temptation to rambling discursiveness, from the very extent of the subject, is almost irresistible. My consolation must be that I may pave the way for a more thorough narrative.

Take the Thames from its source, lost amid flowers and trees, to its mouth, what varied fortunes of men, what endless incidents of national and private history belong to its banks ! Starting from Oxford, there is not space for a reasonable record of "the most loyal city" of noble colleges. A poor hurried chronicler can only make a hop, step, and jump from Alfred to the Henrys, from Elizabeth's Latin speeches to Charles's lying in siege, from George and Charlotte attended by "little Burney" to Victoria and Albert in their flower of youth, virtue, and happiness. And after all one should have left out the

kings and queens in their visits to make room, not for the scholars but the martyrs, the good men who had faith enough to die for their faith—Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, whose ashes ought to have been the life-seed of Oxford. Old Father Thames saw the smoke of the woful burnings, and he can tell whether it warmed the damp, stagnant air, and infused into it an inextinguishable love of truth and a manly earnestness of purpose which should mark Oxford men for all time,

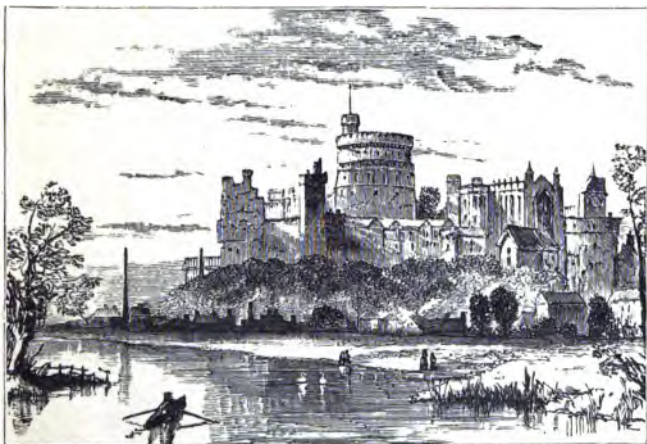


VIEW OF OXFORD.

or whether baffled seekers among them be doomed to find, with noble exceptions, chiefly aristocratic Casaubons and Dryasdusts, dilettante artists and big boys unwearied in play.

Through the richest and greenest of English woods and meadows, by pleasant towns, quiet villages, and stately mansions, the traveller journeys to Eton and Windsor, sees the grand towers of St. George rise on his view, and knows he has a palace on one hand, and on the other not a prison, but a venerable nursery for gently-born lads. What cannot

Windsor Terrace, Windsor Chapel, and the cottages of the



WINDSOR CASTLE.



ETON COLLEGE.

Poor Knights tell of royal pageants, royal happiness and misery, and penniless old soldiers? Then turn to the quaint

town of Eton, and ask what illustrious names are preserved on its lists, what famous man occupied that room or sat at this desk. Make yourself certain whether the time-honoured celebration of "Eton Montem," with the custom of summarily stopping all carriages and demanding "salt" to grace the banquet of the head boy, has entirely passed away, while the procession of Boats still survives on the 4th of June.



CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

Near the Thames lies Runnymede, where the basest of English sovereigns, constrained by his bold barons and the true-hearted Archbishop of Canterbury, secured, against the caitiff John's will, the liberty of his unhappy subjects. Up by bowery Twickenham, where Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montague philandered and squabbled furiously, the Thames is still a clear olive-tinted stream. Beyond is Chelsea, with the great hospital for old soldiers. These pensioners have figured in more than

one fine picture that has gone to the heart of England, for English painters as well as the English nation at large have dearly loved the Thames. William Hogarth is buried in its vicinity. Turner, that strangest genius, embittered and savage in his generosity, yet not unkindly to his younger comrades when they took him on the right side, not only immortalized



LAMBETH PALACE.

the river, he sought it in his sorry disguises, and died under an assumed name in one of the cottages which commanded a view of the water.

Princely prelates still dwell in Lambeth, and the Lollards' Tower continues a monument of tyrannous persecution and faithful vindication of the rights of conscience and freedom to worship God according to man's private judgment.

Black and turbid the river rolls past Westminster—with its parliaments, its coronations, its state trials—under the bridge—like the other bridges on the Thames, a true Bridge of Sighs to many miserable men and women who have crouched under the arches or leaped in despair from the parapets. It is worth pausing in the flow of the tide which flushes the great English river, to stand a while with uncovered head by Westminster. On the site of the noble abbey once rose a temple of Apollo. In the days when Sebert the king built a Christian church there, St. Peter claimed it as his own, as St. Paul claimed the sister church, which had been a temple of Diana. The first apostle, mindful of his ancient trade, multiplied the salmon in the river, and promised that the fish should never fail so long as they were tithed to the abbey. Edward the Confessor built a statelier pile where Sebert's church had stood, but it was left to a later king than the gentle and pious albino, Henry III., a sufferer in his turn from the weight of the crown, to rear a great portion of the princely Westminster which still remains. Henry VII. put the finishing touch to the royal cathedral. Saxon and Norman, Plantagenet and Tudor, had each a hand in the work. Not kings and nobles alone sleep under its shadow. Westminster Abbey is the *Campo Santo* of England. It is the field where the great dead are thickly sown. It has its Poets' Corner as well as its Henry VII.'s Chapel. Soldiers, statesmen, philanthropists, actors, musicians, all sleep well there.

Hard by the abbey rise the towers of St. Stephen's, beneath which sit the Lords and Commons who rule the country.

There is found all that is left of old Westminster Hall, which, like the abbey, has endured much rebuilding and seen strange sights since Wallace was condemned, poor Richard II. resigned his crown under fear of death, and Warren Hastings, ex-governor of a vast empire, knelt for a moment like a criminal at its bar.

The neighbouring Bridge of Westminster was built in 1760,



OLD WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

after much opposition in Parliament and many threats of failure and disaster. It dealt a deathblow to the old wherries and jolly young watermen. Two foreigners were intimately connected with the structure, the Swiss builder Labelye, who was its architect, and the Italian painter Canaletto, who made a picture of it in his early days.

In the troublous times of the Protectorate, when Edward

VI. was displaying his budding boyish virtues under a host of difficulties, when wars and rumours of wars filled the country, and the smouldering fire of the plague was leaping up now and again with tokens of new and worse outbreaks, the unscrupulous Duke of Somerset pulled down an Inn of Court, demolished three bishops' residences, destroyed a church and churchyard, and plundered old St. Paul's* in order to secure space and materials for a palace of his own, which was to occupy an area of six hundred feet by five hundred, and be the first Italian edifice erected in England. John of Padua did his part, but it is thought the arrogant duke never slept a night beneath the roof which he had raised at such cost. On the 22nd of January 1476 the Duke of Somerset, like many a better man, had his head cut off on Tower Hill between eight and nine in the morning. The whole place was rebuilt a century ago by Sir W. Chambers, and became the Government office it still is.

Many an old house, including Essex House, once stood on the Strand, and stretched green and shady gardens to the river. The names of the noble owners cling to the adjoining streets, such as "Norfolk Street," "Howard Street," "Arundel Street."

The old palace of the Savoy was John of Gaunt's town house, and there he bestowed one of Edward III.'s royal prisoners, the chivalrous John of France, who when bidden be merry, answered in the words of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, "How can we sing in a strange land?" Wat Tyler burned the Savoy, but forbade his followers to touch its treasures, and flung into the Thames a disobedient man who had appropriated

* Knight.

a silver cup. A hundred years ago what was left of the old palace had sunk into disorderly barracks and a scandalous military prison. In the reign of Queen Victoria the place has been purified, restored, and what was its old chapel rebuilt as a church. Indeed the Savoy has been a famous rendezvous for divines from the time of Cromwell and his Roundheads.



ESSEX HOUSE.

St. Paul's, with its great cupola after the fashion of St. Peter's at Rome, looks down on Paul's Wharf and Paul's Stairs. Here an older St. Paul's suffered a baptism of fire, and Sir Christopher Wren reconstructed the city cathedral which Inigo Jones had just restored. Because St. Paul's is identified with the people as Westminster is with their kings, the two chief captains who saved the nation by land and sea, Wellington and Nelson, bear each other company under the huge dome.

Then a little farther down comes the Tower itself, with its Traitor's Gate opening on the water. The river begins to



SAVOY PALACE.

clear again and to taste salt at high tide when it flows opposite Greenwich Hospital, which has exchanged its old for young



BARGES ON THE THAMES.

tars. This is a Thames covered with barges, sailing vessels, and steamers, always on the increase as the river

widens and deepens down to Gravesend, another Thames from the placid stream which is still christened the Isis at Bossum's Ferry, and is only ruffled by the oars of the "Torpid" and the "Eights" in the spring and summer boat-races, and noisy



SOURCE OF THE FLEET.

with the shouts of excited undergraduates scouring along the towing-path from Iffley.

The source of the Fleet, which gave a notorious prison its name, looks pleasant enough ; but the stream when it had degenerated into a ditch was of evil odour, as described by Pope :—

“King of dykes, than whom no sluice of mud
With deeper sable blots the silver flood.”

Close by Fleet Bridge, next door to a china shop,* stood the chapel in which the Fleet marriages were celebrated according to advertisement. The officiating clergyman was said to be a parson who had been a chaplain in a man-of-war, and had



FLEET BRIDGE.

“gloriously distinguished himself” in the service of his king and country ; yet he was not above lending his aid for a handsome fee to the clandestine marriages into which foolish young girls and lads, heiresses and heirs, rushed headlong or were craftily inveigled. After all, the hurried, generally ill-fated ceremony took place oftenest in a convenient ale-house, or within the

* Knight.

prison bounds, in the room of some debtor who was a disgrace to his priest's orders, and who made a good income by these marriages. The thoughtless belles of the Pantheon, Ranelah, and Bellsizes had too frequently cause to rue the day which saw their hands given away in the ill-omened precincts of the Fleet. The Marriage Bill of 1753 put an end to these scandalous marriages; but so reluctantly did the feather-headed half of the public part with the opportunity, that on the last day a Fleet marriage was legal, three hundred of such marriages were celebrated!

In the adjoining prison, where hapless debtors sometimes dragged out scores of years of misery, the most cruel and even criminal outrages were committed on the prisoners who could not bribe their infamous gaolers. Filth and starvation, gaol-fever, open wickedness, and secret murder are among the terrible records of the Fleet before General Oglethorpe, John Howard, and Elizabeth Fry came like strong angels of purity and mercy to deliver those who were bound.

The writer regrets there is not space to do justice to some of the Welsh rivers, such as the Wye and the Usk, with their memories of the old harpers, Owen Glendower, the old-fashioned market-women in the steeple-crowned hats over the round caps, and that strange pair who vowed eternal friendship, and in order to keep the vow forsook their country and friends to bury themselves among the wild Welsh mountains. Lady Emily Butler and Miss Ponsonby too assumed men's hats and men's jackets over their riding-jackets, so as to appear like two stout commonplace

Amazons in the portraits which have been preserved of them.

The mouth of the Severn was wont to receive the Danish pirates who landed and pillaged Bristol.

In the Fen Country one particular Ouse figured as such a domineering tyrant that it got the name of the "Bailiff of



THE USK.

Bedford." Unquestionably John Bunyan heard its hoarse challenge and recoiled from its cold grasp.

Men have taken the name of the Tees and given it to one of their breeds of cattle, just as the South Downs have been made to lend their name to the largest, whitest-faced, softest-hearted sheep.

Across the gruesome chasm called "The Strid," in which the foaming Wharfe is confined, "the noble boy of Egremont "

leaped, holding in a leash the greyhound which, slipping, dragged down his young master. "What is good for a bootless bene?" (an unanswered prayer,) asked the faithful forester of the bereft mother; and she answered, speaking from her broken heart, "An endless sorrow." But a divine consolation lit up the gloom of desolation, when out of the sorrow rose Bolton Priory, where other mothers still prayed hopefully for their sons.

The Tyne has its own special song, with a North Country ring in it—

"Merry may the keel row, the keel row, the keel row,
Merry may the keel row that my lad's in."

And the Tyne boatmen are surpassed in their rowing by no other boatmen, not even by the jolly young watermen of the Thames.

So far as I can tell, the Tweed is the solitary river in Great Britain which has earned an epithet in reference either to colour or clearness. The Tweed was once in reality, and remains in memory—let the worst be done by the mills of the clothworkers, who have added insult to injury by bestowing the name of the river on their best approved cloth—"the siller Tweed." No native river had in its own valley a more unpolluted pebbly strand. The Tweed rippled along between green holms by Neidpath Castle. From these ramparts the dying girl bent down to hail the banished lover, recalled too late by a sorrowing father. She met the unrecognising glance raised to her changed face, and smitten by the pang of the unwitting forgetfulness, fell back dead while the lover's hurrying feet were on the stair as he came eagerly and joyfully to greet her. Elibank Tower, the rude house of Muckle-mou'ed

Meg, stood on the Tweed; so did Yair, with its "race" of Pringles, and Fernielea, in which Alison Rutherford first sang her "Flowers of the Forest." "Fair Melrose" mirrors itself in the river within sight of the three peaks into which Michael the Wizard divided the Eildons. Sir Walter Scott cared more to be reckoned a Tweedside laird than a world-wide poet and novelist. Ashiestiel and Abbotsford, the homes he loved best, were both by the Tweed. To the music of its waters he wrote the most of his imperishable novels. By the yellow Tiber and the green Rhine he pined for "the siller Tweed." On his return as a dying man from the disastrous journey to Italy, he was lifted up in the carriage to catch the flash of the familiar water. As he breathed his last the sound of the Tweed was heard through the open windows softly hushing him to sleep, and he sleeps by the Tweed.

The Clyde and the Annan both rise within a short distance of the source of the Tweed, and in a rhyming dispute which is the greatest Annan claims the ghastly pre-eminence, that whatever the others may have to say with regard to length and breadth—

" Whar you droon ae man,
I droon three."

On the Clyde the first steamboat was tried. Scores of steamers now "run" every hour, steering their way through a crowd of shipping, from the Broomielaw—strange old title for a landing-place in the middle of the smoke and din of a great city—past "Glasgow, down the water," in miles on miles of loch-side villas, to the wild western coast and the island-studded Atlantic, made so often and so lovingly the scene of

William Black's novels, where if you but sail long enough the breeze is as fresh as when it blew over ancient Caledon, and no sound is to be heard save the dash of the waves and the screech of the sea-birds. What queer, untamed freights of clansmen and drovers, Highland shelties and Highland kylie, the Clyde ferry-boats, when they were the sole means of transport, must have borne !

Accompanying the river Clyde upwards into Lanarkshire, through a coal and iron country as grimy and sooty as the Black Country round Wigan or Birmingham, the wayfarer reaches Bothwell Castle, one of the grandest ruins in Scotland. There Marjory Douglas was made the bride of an unwilling bridegroom ; and there a still more unhappy lady uttered her piteous plaint—if she had but known what was to befall that poor heart of hers, she would have taken good care to hide it away in a "siller kist," and have "steekit" the kist with "a gowden pin." Still higher, near the Clyde, when it is a pretty rural stream rising in a pastoral country, Moffat Water breaks into falls which have received the homely country-folks' title of "The Grey Mare's Tail."

Overhanging the Nith and the Liddel are red scaurs down which trailing sprays of dark-green ivy, peach-budded, white-flowered bramble, and dog-roses flaunt themselves. By the wooded Nith stands the stately Castle of Drumlanrig, among the heathery hills of the Liddel rise the massive walls of Hermitage, keeps of great strength and renown in old Border warfare. To Hermitage rode passion-tossed Queen Mary, driven by an unhappy impulse of mingled recklessness and

pity to soothe the chafed spirit and sick body of her husband's murderer and her own lover, James' Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, dreaming dark dreams as he turned on his uneasy bed.

Down in Ayrshire the Doon is linked for ever with Robert Burns, as the Tweed is with Sir Walter Scott. Close around, or at but a little distance, are innumerable scenes which he has rendered immortal. Among them are the Brig of Ayr and Kirk-Alloway, the cottage where the people's poet was born, Castle Downans—where fairies dance. Still for his sake the Doon is "bonnie" in a thousand eyes which never gazed on the stream.

In the north the Tay, sweeping along its volume of water with such rapidity as to render it to a large extent unmanageable for traffic, forms a glittering shield for the Inches of the fair city of Perth. There the clan Chattan and the clan Quhele met in deadly conflict, and the coward Conachar, left the last man on his side, sprang frenzied into the dizzy rush of the water.

By the Tay stood that castle of the Gowries in which the last earl sought the philosopher's stone. He was supposed to be less innocently engaged when the British Solomon was entrapped, or made believe he was entrapped, into his old enemy the Ruthven's power. By the Tay rose the Palace of Scone, and from Scone to Westminster went the old coronation stone, the stone of destiny of Scotch kings.

Still farther north, among the heathery wilds commanded by Ben-y-Vrackie, the Tummel and Garry whirl in strong eddies

as of old, when they bore part in the refrain of pibrochs and coronachs summoning shrilly to war and sinking in wailing sobs over the dead and the exiled.

In the north-east of Scotland the floods of the Spey a century ago are not yet forgotten. Whole valleys were laid waste. The chimneys of farmhouses rose like ship-masts above a tossing sea. Horses and cattle were drowned helplessly in the stables and outhouses. One dauntless woman succeeded in embarking her children and herself on the rudest of rafts, where, holding up the skirt of her gown to catch the wind and serve the purpose of a sail, she and her brood were carried down the centre of the current till a boat rescued them from their desperate peril. Two men of poetic faculty have given vivid descriptions of the awful chaos produced by the outburst of waters and of the spirit-stirring adventures which occurred during the overflow. There is the original account by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, and there is the excellent use of it made by George Macdonald in his exquisite romance of "Sir Gibbie." A Scotch painter of the present day laid the foundation of his fame in his graphic representation of one scene in a similar "spate."

In Aberdeenshire the Don is crowned by the old Brig of Balgownie, on which Byron stood in defiance of the prophecy that it would fall with "a wife's ae son and a mare's ae foal."

The sister river the Dee, under the shoulder of Ben Macdhui, guards Balmoral, where a royal life can be domestic. "Hurricanes of reels" have thundered to its music as the deer-stalkers have laid down their trophies, and with unexhausted thews and

sinews danced by the torchlight, gleaming red on the brown water. It has reflected the happy faces of pair after pair of princely lovers, and the sorrowful face of a widowed queen faithful till death.

Across St. George's Channel the Boyne is still so identified with the battle which ended a dynasty, that the mere mention of the Boyne Water not only brings thoughts of poor, melancholy, swarthy King James "winning the race" from the field, and of the great captains, the Duke of Berwick and William of Orange—heroic in spite of silence and asthma, but as infallibly sets Irishmen by the ears as the faintest whisper of the siege of Derry.

The Shannon, though it borders on wild Connemara, is decidedly the more peacefully-sounding river of the two; yet the Shannon also has a very tolerable flavour of sprigs of shillelah as well as of sprigs of shamrock.

One at least of the Irish lakes is said to cover such a buried city as that which Sir Arthur Helps made the locality of his witty and tender "Realmah."

Little Loch Leven, in the shelter of the Fife Lomonds, is full of romantic, pathetic interest; for in the castle prison on its island unfortunate Queen Mary tasted her first bitter experience of captivity. From this alone of all her prisons she made her escape, by young George Douglas stealing the castle keys while the seneschal sat at supper. Have we not all read the moving story in Sir Walter's "Abbot" until we can believe we have cowered beside the lovely lady in the dairy-woman's cloak in the crowded boat, and peered out in the gloom for the glimmer of the light in Blinkhoolie's cottage?

By lone St. Mary's Loch, where

"The swan floats double,
Swan and shadow,"

the two poet friends Wordsworth and Scott part sorrowfully, knowing that their earthly fellowship is wellnigh over. A burly figure wrapped in a plaid makes a third in the group. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, stops us to ask if we can have forgotten "Bonnie Kilmeny" and the "Brownie of Bodsbeck."

Scotch lochs of smaller dimensions make many a joyous rendezvous when the frost has the land in its grip. They are the appropriate field for the national game of "curling." High and low, from stalwart peers to able-bodied masons out of work, hurry to the contest. The stones, silver-mounted and cairngorm-set, or rimmed with rusty iron, crash and roll, skim and hiss along the glassy surface. The sweepers flourish their brooms at every redoubtable throw, the keen air rings with the shouts of the combatants.

What a song Tennyson has made of the "Brook"! How he has pictured it in every stage of its progress! Still the English brook for the most part, whether from local or psychological reasons, is deficient in story. One has to go to the beck or the burn, especially to "the wan water" of pastoral Scotland, to find every little river with its characteristic ballad. Down the Megget Water "pricked" the king's men who were bound to quell the lawlessness of the moss-troopers. And the soldiers slew Johnnie Armstrong, the Cock of the Borders, and Piers Cockburn of Henderland, whose widow,

left in her "extremities," took his body on her back and "laid the mools on his yellow hair."

Across the Douglas Water rode the fugitive pair when the knight sought to persuade the lady it was the reflection of his scarlet mantle, and not of his fast-flowing life-blood, which she saw in the water.



STREAMLET.

But there are burns and brooks which have no ballads and yet hold entwined with their existence the history of generation after generation. How many children have

waded and caught minnows or erected mimic mills in their shallows! How many lovers have strolled by their margin! How many young mothers have bidden their babies see themselves reflected in the quickly-shifting mirror! How many old men and women have loitered and dreamt over again the past which was lived in the sight and sound of the water that is still stealing along before their eyes and tinkling in their ears!

CHAPTER V.

On the Sea and by the Shore.



AFTER A STORM.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SEA AND BY THE SHORE.



THE sea, steel-blue in the light of morning, burnished copper in the glow of sunset, leaden under a leaden sky, always heaving and restless, always of a savoury saltiness, with the aroma of brine in its very breezes, is no sovereign's domain.

Nevertheless English captains claimed the Spanish main in the name of the King of England. Englishmen have been prouder, if possible, of their sway over the sea than of their might on shore. One of our patriotic songs boasts with a considerable amount of swagger that "Britannia rules the waves."

From Bristol Sebastian Cabot sailed in search of a new world. From Devon Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, worthy half-brothers, departed on a similar quest, and bequeathed their memories to western seas. Sir Hugh Montgomery, "that captain tall," was the first Englishman to tempt the spirit of the North Pole, as Sir John Franklin and his men were the last heavy tribute paid to the inexorable demands of cold and darkness, fog and snow, and the ghastly glittering iceberg, a thousand times more formidable than the grisly white bear.

At Torbay William of Orange landed, and in little more than six weeks walked quietly into the Palace of St. James's. The gallant adversary of Louis XIV. came fearlessly with his handful of Dutchmen and those Adullamites whom James's despotism and disloyalty to the laws of the land had driven into exile, and carried out a glorious and nearly bloodless revolution. Small, spare, and asthmatic, the hero of Protestant Europe yet presented a noble figure as he stepped on shore in his velvet coat, Steinkirk cravat, and great plumed hat.

Near the Antarctic Circle, on one of the dreary islands which cluster about Terra del Fuego, a rashly brave and devoted English missionary died heroically with his companions. But the fame of their disinterested enterprise and their gallant endurance survives and extends beyond the warning supplied by their lack of prudence, with the disastrous termination of the adventure. It was perpetuated in the first missionary ship, called the *Alan Edwards*, destined to carry light to the benighted Patagonians. A happy adaptation of the idea sent

the Southern Cross to cruise among the sunny islands of the Pacific. And what although the first Bishop of Melanesia proved a martyr bishop? Would Coleridge Patteson have desired a better end?

Without doubt from the North Sea to the South, from the



TORBAY.

Atlantic to the Pacific, Englishmen have left their handwriting, for good or for evil, on the unstable water. The old Vikings were hardly more resolute in asserting their right to the sea as a heritage than Englishmen have shown themselves. Whatever fault may be found with our soldiers beyond the unassailable points of courage and fidelity, however much our military genius may be sneered at, we can hold our own in

sailors and naval battles. Since the Great Harry and the Great Michel were launched in English and Scotch waters ; since Drake played out his game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, and Blake at last broke the pride of the Dutch, though not till Van Tromp had swept the Channel with the mocking broom at his masthead ; since Rodney, Anson, Collingwood, Nelson, Camperdown, and Dundonald maintained the power of England on the sea, and defied every combination of numbers and skill to beat her on her native element, the sea is scored with the records of English victories rarely intermingled with English defeats. From the mouth of the Nile, where crocodiles sleep, to the shores of the Baltic with their veins of amber ; from Trafalgar, which cost us dear, to the Greek waters where a Scotchman as daring at sea as Garibaldi has been on shore, mocked all cautious counsel and overthrew all rational conclusions, Britannia has some plea for confidence, though no excuse for bragging, where her wooden walls and the waves are concerned. All along the British shores the fishermen are the hardiest of the hardy, the pilots among the most gallant, even the idle yachtsmen laugh at the danger with which they play.

Yet no familiarity with the sea, and no supremacy acquired over it, serve to prevent a long list of dismal wrecks being added every year to the catalogue of national calamities. The deep crimson, emerald green, and soft olive belts of seaweed which bound the coast are strewn with earth's treasures the most precious of all—the bleached bones which once constituted the framework of the goodly tabernacles that held immortal souls.

But these stories of wrecks are not altogether depressing reading. One stormy night a ship in distress was driven on the iron coast of Northumberland not far from the Holy Isle of the old Culdees. She was caught on some of the jagged peaks of the Fern Islands, where she remained for hours before she was beaten and bruised to pieces. All night long despairing men hung in the shrouds. When the daylight dawned dim and pale beneath the dense array of scudding clouds above a raging sea, hope revived in the worn and weary hearts as the spray-blinded eyes doubtfully descried, and the stiffening tongues eagerly proclaimed, the approach of a fisherman's boat to take the shipwrecked sailors off. But the boldest of them held his breath or cried out awestruck that an angel had come to their succour, when he saw that the boat—buffeted, tossed, and struggling for very life against the wild wind and great waves, ending in the cruel white breakers—was rowed by a single boatman and a courageous girl with her woman's gown fluttering and her long loosened hair streaming in the gale. Grace Darling was neither angel nor Amazon, she was a simple fisher-girl doomed to fall a victim ere long to consumption. But when no other helper was to be found she took her life in her hand and risked it unhesitatingly for perishing strangers.

On the coast of Wigtownshire, early on a cloudless summer morning when the sea was as still as glass, the steamer Orion, plying between Hull and Greenock, steered too near the shore, ran on a sunk rock, sprang a leak, and sunk within a few minutes. Only one accidental watcher on the shore,

where the houses were still shut up and the inhabitants sunk in sleep, saw the disaster, and under the circumstances assistance could not have been given in time to prevent the loss of many lives. Among the passengers were visitors from America who had crossed the broad Atlantic in safety, to perish locked in their cabin on what seemed to them like a river trip. There was the head of a Highland clan belonging to one of the wave-washed western islands, who might have been supposed to take to the water as kindly as a sea-otter or a pyet. He was on board with his wife, two daughters, and two sons. They were going home to their island, where, as it happened, the father had just built a family vault capable of holding four coffins. It was filled at once with the coffins of the laird, his wife, and his two daughters, though one of the girls was actually cast alive and unhurt, above the flow of the tide, on the shore, where, happily for her, she died of the terror of the shock before she ever knew how doubly and trebly she had been bereaved. Only the two lads, who could weather the desolation which had befallen them, were saved. There was another girl coming alone from her English school to her family in Scotland. She had sat with the others on the deck the evening before, and listened to travellers' tales of adventure, peril, and death by drowning, which sounded experiences far removed from the prosperous summer voyagers. One fact mentioned in her hearing was that if a drowning man or woman can remain perfectly still, the body will, by a law of nature, float on the surface of the water so long as life is left in it. She was startled from sleep soon after sunrise by the

force of the blow, and the shiver with which the vessel struck and settled on the rock. She ran on deck in her nightdress with many of the other passengers. Even her ignorant young eyes recognised amidst the confusion what had occurred, and what was soon to follow. She got a cloak from a gentleman whom she asked to put her into the water. Either he complied with her request or she contrived to let herself slip over the gunwale. She lay for half an hour before she was taken up, when the breast of the cloak was found perfectly dry. She had not stirred hand or foot from the moment that she was in the water. Her friends hurried to the scene of the terrible calamity the moment the news reached them. They believed that whoever might have escaped, the young helpless girl, travelling alone, must have perished. They found her safe and uninjured, thanks to her presence of mind and courage.

The grey "gurdy" Bay of St. Andrews witnessed George Wishart's burning and a fierce retribution for a barbarous deed when Norman Leslie seized the castle and hung Cardinal Beatoun from the window where he had sat and presided over the martyrdom. Like Oxford also in another respect, St. Andrews is the seat of an ancient and famous university. But unlike Oxford in this instance, in place of the placid Thames the German Ocean growls and shakes its mane by the old town of St. Rule, the early ecclesiastical capital of Scotland. Storms are common and wrecks not infrequent on the neighbouring coast. In comparatively recent times, but before the installation of a lifeboat, such a wreck took place, when, in the absence of more likely volunteers, a young divinity student

named Honey swam half-a-dozen turns, with a rope passed round his body, through the seething flood between the sands and the doomed ship, and delivered as many sorely-bested mariners. It is said that his constitution was so injured by his indefatigable exertions on this winter night that he never entirely recovered from the consequences, though he lived to take his degree, preach his trial sermon before his presbytery, receive his licence, and arrive at the modest dignity of a placed minister in a quiet country kirk and manse. He died betimes, in his landward home, of the effects of the hard night's work at sea.

Lighthouses—great lamps held aloft over the unslumbering sea—bear witness not only to the indomitable energy and patience of the English marine engineers, with Telford at their head, but to the fearless pluck and unfeigned faith and self-reliance of the men who consent to lead strange isolated lives in these tower-cages between sea and sky. The lighthouse stories alone might fill a volume, were we to begin with the first founding of the Eddystone; include the romance of Sir Ralph the Rover, who cut away in sheer wantonness the Inchcape bell, fastened to the rock by the command of the good Abbot of Aberbrothock, and was the first victim of his wicked folly; and not forget the tragedy on the adjoining little island of May, when an outbreak of sulphur fumes caused the death of the whole people on the island—the keeper and his family—with the single exception of an infant found alone in its cradle, from the strange law by which the tottering old man and woman and helpless baby can exist in the bad air that

chokes and poisons the strong man and woman in their prime.

The coast of Great Britain forms a very varied line, even when it is the present and not the ancient coast-line, which at this day is sometimes half a mile from the modern shore. We have arms of the sea enlocked by mountain ranges, shelving downs and links, bold precipices, flat sands. By one of the lovely lochs the mermaid of Colonsay sat and sang. Over the chalk cliffs the samphire-gatherers hung, and mad Tom threatened to leap.

On the very front of one of the cliffs at Hastings, where there seems hardly footing for a goat, a niche in the rocky hillside has long been known as "The Lovers' Seat." A young girl, the daughter of one of the local gentry, engaged herself against the wishes of her family to a naval officer. She was sent from home to be out of his way, but her family made her place of banishment, rather injudiciously, the coast town off which a frigate's cutter could occasionally lie very conveniently. When this was the case the girl, responding to a signal from the sea, climbed to the eyrie, where she was joined by her lover. The temporary opposition of the relations was overcome, and the couple were married in course of time; but alas! the gallant sailor was washed overboard from the deck of his ship one dark and gusty night, and the happy wife became a sorrowing widow.

The shores of the Solway had an evil repute for quicksands, which were believed to open and swallow up their prey. The creator of the Master of Ravenswood made him vanish in this

manner. The real danger, so far as the Solway was concerned, arose from the rapid advance of the tide, which caught and carried away unwary pedestrians. The great London preacher, Edward Irving, had to do with a narrow escape from the overwhelming peril. Similar rescues are twice described by Sir Walter Scott, in "Redgauntlet" and in "The Antiquary."

On the sands of Galloway, Covenanting tradition points to the spot where two godly, steadfast women, one old and one young, stood chained to stakes fixed within tide-mark. The cold weltering waves rose on the enduring bodies, which the spirits within, with the grace that was given them, conquered, till the waters passed over the sufferers' heads and the brave earnest souls were in eternity. Men have doubted the martyrdom, and still more, have cast scorn upon it, because the women died—supposing that they did thus die,* for refusing to sign what was practically a declaration of submission to the reigning king and established government. But to the women and their leaders the government was chiefly an instrument of cruel and blasphemous persecution, while Charles II. had proved a renegade and traitor. To acknowledge the rights of either was to set, in many eyes, the women's simple seal to grossest profanity and wickedness.

All the annals of the sea-shore are not heroic, sentimental, and solemn. On the steep brow of a promontory on the southern coast of Ireland is a certain tottering stone with

* Although zealous searchers among old State Papers believed that they found a reprieve for the sentence, the bulk of the evidence, traditional and otherwise, goes to prove that it was put into execution.

regard to which whoever can reach it and kiss it, becomes endowed with the doubtful gift of a beguiling tongue.

Among the natural marvels of the shore are such wonderful rocks and caves as the Giant's Causeway and Staffa. But observe how human imagination has coloured and peopled them. The basaltic rocks become the property of giants, and just as the hill in the form of the *lion couchant* which guards the Scottish capital was regarded as the British King Arthur's Seat, minor rocks have still their names full of lifelike meaning. Such are the "Maiden Rock;" the "Rock and Spindle;" the "Vœux," on which a French ship so named was wrecked; "Girzie's Herring-Barrel," a deep sea-pool in a rocky amphitheatre. The sea-bird-crowded rock of the Bass once bore a terrible State prison, not unlike the Neapolitan prisons of modern times, in which good and bad men alike pined and died by inches of rheumatism and consumption.

Ailsa Craig, on the opposite side of Scotland, was more fortunate in being given over from the beginning to solan geese, gannets, and curlews. Its sole human association consists of the lively comparison which Burns made, when he said of a spoiled rustic beauty's stony obduracy to her lover's suit—

"Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig."

The sea-caves, which exist at intervals in all the higher coast-lines, are rich in antiquarian, historical, and romantic annals as well as in scientific interest. To mention only a few of them, there are caves both in the extreme north and about the centre of Scotland which bear strange symbols and rude

inscriptions. These may be either Druidical, or early Christian, or Runic, but they certainly point to remote human history, as the cave near Whitby, which contains the fossil remains of elephants and tigers, indicates a far-back geological era when the climate of England was that of the tropics.

There is one cave on the coast of Fife which has a more recent though still an ancient story. It is said to have been for a time the refuge of the thane Macduff when he fled from the usurper Macbeth. There is a certain corroboration of the statement in the fact that the neighbouring village, with the "restored" ruin of an abbey, is called Earlsferry, and that its fishermen once possessed the peculiar privilege of being entitled to row a fugitive half-way across the Firth of Forth before the servants of the law were at liberty to follow. This species of sanctuary is known to have been claimed, and the claim admitted, within the last two hundred years. A Scotch laird was slain in a night-brawl in the streets of a little Forfarshire town, when the slayer fled to Earlsferry, and availing himself of the right enjoyed by the natives, escaped to England before the officers of justice and the kindred of the dead man could overtake him. Whether or not Macduff, with all his pretty chicks and their dam slain at one fell swoop of his enemy, lay hiding in this sea-cave, it continues to be known by his name. It is a high, shallow rift in the grey rock, letting in the blue sky overhead. At full tide the waves dash into what now constitutes the cave, while there are traces of a rude wall, probably the work of smugglers, built to bar the progress of the water. The sea-thrift still renders the

sea-braes rosy as hope itself, the wild blue geranium and the yellow ragwort never fail to make them gay in summer, though the light feet which used to scramble there are at rest.

The sea brought strange invaders and colonists over and over again to the coasts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. After centuries the strangers, long naturalized, can yet be traced by personal traits and tricks of speech. The stalwart Dane preserves his fair comely bulk and burs on in Northumberland.

At the little village of Newhaven, in the county of Midlothian, there is a population of fishermen and women who betray to this day their Flemish extraction in the square figures, the pure red-and-white complexion, and the women's costume, which includes a man's jacket, full short petticoats, and a snowy-winged cap—an adaptation of the cap of the Antwerp women. There are no more marked and individual figures in the streets of Edinburgh than those of the Newhaven fishwives, of one of whom Charles Reade the novelist has made a heroine, and called her "Christie Johnstone."

One of the vessels of the Invincible Armada drifted, against the will of the Spanish don who commanded it, in the height of the storm which helped the English captains to disperse Philip's fleet, into the harbour of Anstruther or Anster, in Fife. The minister of the parish at the time was one of the two Melvilles of learned and Presbyterian fame. Happily for the stranded invaders he was something more than a scholar and Presbyterian, he was a magnanimous and merciful Christian gentleman. When his fellow-townsmen flocked to the manse, according to custom, to ask his advice in the strange turn of

affairs which had brought their enemy helpless to their doors, he strongly recommended generous clemency and brotherly kindness. The battered and belated Spaniards, prepared to stand at bay, were even hospitably entertained by their foes before they were sent away in peace. Anster had its reward when, in the years to come, a Fife vessel found itself by an evil chance a prisoner in a Spanish harbour, and the Spaniards were not to be outdone in fairness and friendliness. At the suggestion of the noble don who had tasted the forbearance of the men of Fife, the East Neuk skipper was not only set at liberty with his bark and crew intact, he returned to his native coast laden with gifts from his grateful captors.

We have this pleasant story in James Melville's diary, but I do not think there is any allusion there to an additional particular supplied by local tradition. One Spanish sailor, whether disqualified by illness or inclination, failed to return home with his ship. He was so well pleased with his hosts that he settled among them. And within the recollection of living people, his descendants, bearing a corrupted Spanish name, and retaining the black hair and eyes and nimble feet in dancing of their common ancestor's race, were still to be found in the little town.

CHAPTER VI.

**In Gardens, among Homely Flowers and
“Common Vegetables” and Fruit-trees.**

CHAPTER VI.

IN GARDENS, AMONG HOMELY FLOWERS AND "COMMON
VEGETABLES" AND FRUIT-TREES.



ARDENS are certainly of men and women's devising, and full of them and their ways. From the elaborate hanging gardens of the East to the roughest patch reclaimed from the Western wilderness ; from the stately garden, which implies old English, Italian, Dutch, and American varieties, with the last fancy in ribbon borders and subjugated houseleeks, to the cottage garden and primitive kailyard, men and women have made gardens after the fashion of that first garden which the parents of the race were appointed to keep, according to the ancient Mosaic record. And there are few men and women who do not, when they have the opportunity, to this day, covet and cherish a domain, under whatever limitations, where the children play, the young people chatter and dream, the middle-aged rest, and the old begin to grow garrulous, and to dream and play again.

For my own part, I prefer a garden which is full of human associations for me, which in its productions answers to my earliest recollections, and recalls my youth with youth's sweet-

ness and promise. These lately-introduced flowers, brilliant, or dainty, or fragrant, which are the height of the newest fashion, and fetch for the present fabulous prices in the market, may abound in rich memories and tender or merry suggestions to the natives of the countries from which the plants have been lately imported. Even their outlandish names may, for aught that I can tell, signify whole national eras, stirring public events, and moving private incidents to the people who have seen the flowers bud and blossom from the cultivators' cradles to their graves. Grandfathers and great-grandfathers may have bestowed on the plants the very tremendous appellations which threaten to break my jaws, though I am tempted to suspect the polysyllables owe their being to no native lovers of the flowers, but to pedantic botanists and gardeners eaten up with learning. But these foreigners find no road to my heart. They may please my eyes, or tickle my nose, or even gratify some artistic taste with the symmetry of their forms, the splendour of their colouring, the subtle richness of their perfume, but I look in vain for that handwriting which I love to read. And I turn willingly from the new beauties which, when all is said, are mindless and heartless to me, to the old friends with old English and Scotch titles corresponding to national and local interests and fashions ; to flowers which my father and my father's father loved, which my mother and my grandmother wore when they were maidens in their bloom, which my childish fingers plucked in order to share the treasure with other tiny fingers that are now mouldering in the dust.

First of our old garden flowers which held such a monopoly

of favour that they retain it in one form or another to this day are roses and lilies. At least one of our old roses is lost, the musk-rose of Shakespeare, but that is a remote though much-to-be-regretted calamity. A more recent deprivation is the nearly entire disappearance of the large deep pink cup of the sweetest of the sweet cabbage-rose. From thirty to fifty years ago it was found everywhere, much prized for its perfume. Now it has been "gardened" wellnigh out of existence, and but poorly replaced by the hundred-leaved rose, which however luxuriant to see, is by comparison shamefully deficient in scent. The last refuge of the cabbage-rose, apart from the grounds of some old-fashioned rose-connoisseur, is in the remoter cottage gardens, the owners of which have not been bitten with a mania for humble budding and grafting and the introducing of new species.

The common white rose with a dark-green leaf and an open ivory-white flower, the great advantage of which is that it blossoms during its short season with most lavish profusion, seems likely to share the same fate of contemptuous neglect and gradual abolition. This banishment by degrees and absolute extinction of some of the old favourite flowers, often as fair to see, while sweeter to smell, and really more lovable than their successors, is due to the perennial craze for novelty which, as it is a disease inherent to human nature, is as ineradicable as the instinct from which it springs.

Two at least of our roses have a distinct historical association. It may be as impossible to ascertain to-day which was the original rose of England, the selected emblem of the

country, as it is to trace which was the particular lily that first flourished on the banners of France. But it is certain that there is a hardy red-and-white striped or pied rose which since the reign of the first Tudor, and his marriage of expediency with Elizabeth of York, has borne the name of the York and Lancaster rose. The same rose is also called the



GARDEN ROSE.

Maundy rose, from a less easily-traced derivation. It may be because Maundy Thursday is the season of the bestowal of a variety of royal gifts on both men and women, since the recurrence of the anniversary is hardly late enough, even according to old style, for the blossoming of the flower.

The small yellow-white Scotch rose, ultra-prickly in its stem and with a warm spicy odour, is unmistakably the white rose

of the Jacobites. One of the contemporary songs identifies the blossoms by describing them, with pretty quaintness, as

“Like wee white cockades in our kailyaird.”

From the circumstance that it was poor Prince Charlie's emblem, I have no doubt the superstition arose that the offering of a white rose was ill-omened and preceded misfortune. It is just possible that it has an earlier origin, and may refer to the unhappy pretender Perkin Warbeck, called the “White Rose.” The title-deeds of the estate of Glen Ormiston, in the south of Scotland, bear mention of a red rose. The land is held under the obligation that when the reigning king or queen shall set foot on it, the sovereign must be presented by the laird or lady with a red rose. No doubt there was once a story worthy of being preserved bound up with the pretty stipulation.

There are, I believe, various explanations, scantily satisfactory, of the curious expression “under the rose,” with the confidential secrecy implied in the phrase.

There is no more widely-known quotation than Shakespeare's protest—

“A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”

Some critics have been bold enough to dispute the statement, and to insist that the rose would not have smelt sweet at all had it been misnamed “trumpery.” This is merry nonsense all in the spirit of contradiction ; but so much is true that the rose has a fit name, and for the flower's sweet sake, at every time, in every place, and under whatever foreign version, Rose has been a name given to women. The same honour has been

paid freely to the lily and the violet, in the borrowing of their titles and the bestowal of them, with the fond hope that the special attributes would accompany the christening of their human sisters.

I have already said that the lily of France, traced beyond



WHITE LILY.

St. Louis, is doubtful so far as the particular lily first chosen to represent the country is concerned. Some say it was at first the purple iris, though it has long been the *fleur-de-lys*, the tall white lily of the Annunciation which old painters and their modern followers put into the hand of the angel that appeared to Mary. The same lily is frequently painted in the hand of St. Joseph.

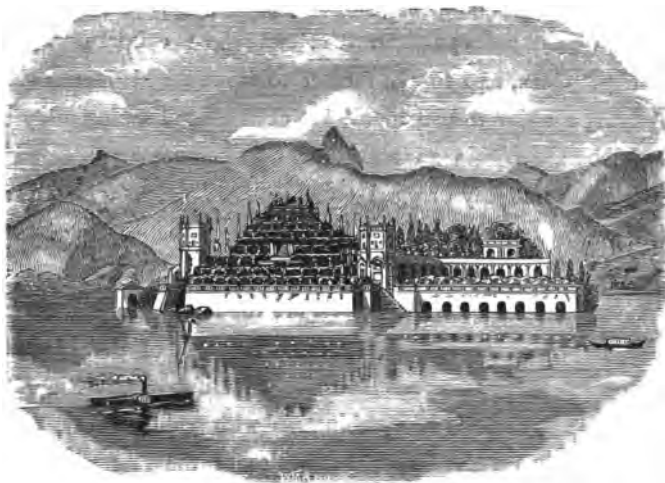
Another legend of the lily is, that when the tomb of the Virgin was opened, there was found in it, in perfect fragrant bloom, a white lily, and that this was the first known to men.

A pathetic story is told by Harriet Martineau of some ignorant French Royalist children who, in the heat of the great Revolution, were made indignant by finding their little lion-dog painted in the Republican tricolour. The children washed their pet clean, and sought further to atone for his humiliation by tying a white ribbon round his neck and fastening a lily in the ribbon. Within an hour they had to weep for him, with his ribbon and lily dragged through the mire, hanging dead, like many a more illustrious victim, from the nearest lamp-post.

Next to roses and lilies, violets are the most historical flower in Europe. Violets were the chosen flower of the imperial Buonapartes. Violets adorned the beautiful creole Empress Josephine. Violets, in combination with golden bees, were sown thickly on the imperial mantles of the first and third Napoleon. Violets clustered in the bosom and hair of another beautiful empress. Violets in heaps have made sweet the graves of the exiled father and the young son slain in the African wilderness in a skirmish with savages.

Before taking the garden flowers in their order as they blossom, I should like to refer to a romantically-preserved child's garden. To an island which has the ruins of a religious house, in a northern loch, Mary Queen of Scots was occasionally taken for security, and doubtless for priestly blessing, in

her early years, before she was sent to France for her education. There is still to be seen on the island a little garden which is said to have been the royal child Mary's garden, where she may have played with her "four Maries," children like herself; at least one of them, Mary Carmichael, lived in the immediate vicinity. It would have been well for the little queen if she



ISOLA BELLA, ON BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, MAGGIORE.

had known no other garden, and eaten of no tree of knowledge save what was supplied by the stunted fruit-trees in that little island in the northern loch, which never was such an *Isola Bella* as is the byword of Lago Maggiore. It was but a shaggy patch of earth with a sufficiently strong religious house on it.*

* Some shrubs and climbing plants reach a great age. There is a jasmine-tree at Naworth which has blossomed there for centuries.

The floral calendar of the year begins with snowdrops and crocuses, which, however welcome, have no express signification, unless indeed when the yellow crocuses are allowed to grow, spread, and prevail on an old tree-planted lawn which is seldom mown. Then if ever "the field of the cloth of gold" was wrought out by nature, it is there before our eyes.

Primroses and cowslips come under the head of wild-flowers. But polyanthuses in brown turned up with yellow, like the old Argyle livery, are strictly garden flowers; so is the



SNOWDROPS.

whole tribe of *Auricula*, one of which rejoices in the homely, comfortable name of "the Dusty Miller."

"Sweet Alison" is a little cheerful white flower which the first bee, come abroad after his winter's imprisonment, is sure to find out and fasten upon. It is known also as "Pretty Betsy," though who the Alison and Betsy were, to whom in compliment it was doubly christened, I cannot tell. I imagine they were country belles with gallant lovers. And so must have been the Nancy after whom the lovely white narcissus is named in the north of England "Sweet Nancy." But as for the particular William in deference to whom a rosy summer

flower is called "sweet," I am inclined to regard him as a somewhat lackadaisical fellow. By a coincidence the flower, which is not remarkably elegant or graceful—on the contrary, it is an erect, sturdy, bunchy plant, with the blossom for the most part of a bright pronounced crimson, when it is not pied



CHALCIDIUS.

or entirely white, and quite without scent—is known in France as "the Poet's Pink." Sweet William considered poetic by our fastidious French neighbours! I should as soon, pleasant flower as it is, look for poetry in a cabbage.

Our English poets had more reason when they loved and proclaimed their love for the yellow daffodil, the old "daffondowndilly," breaking into different shades of yellow,

from rich amber to palest maize, with its tall stalks, nodding heads, and long lance-shaped leaves, the tint of green oats, which form an exquisite setting and foil, in point of colour, to the flower. Young Proserpine was gathering daffodils in the fields of Enna when gloomy Pluto swooped down in his car, and the dove became perforce the mate of the raven.



DAFFODILS.

Japanese lilies and other lilies from far foreign places are beyond measure more magnificent, but for the sake of Herrick, who besought the daffodil not to haste away so soon, to stay

“ But to the evensong,
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.”

And of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, who watched and

recorded their delight in the lilies' dance in the wind, a true English man or woman must still hold the daffodil dear.

The flower is sometimes called by country-people the Lent lily, because when Lent happens to be late it is distinguished by a bloom of daffodils. The daffodil belongs to the *Amaryllis* tribe, which, however beautiful the flowers, have roots so poisonous that savages are said to poison their arrows with them.

Jonquils have a French grace and sweetness and an aroma of Louis XIV. When the Grand Monarque, with his huge nose and huger periwigs, his warlike fame and magnificent despotism, made his costly progresses between Paris and Versailles, the road was often carpeted with pretty perishing jonquils, a custom which had its sad significance.

The narcissus, to which I have referred in another page as "the Sweet Nancy" of Lancashire weavers, is a living monument of the handsome youth who fell in love with his own image in the water.

Iris is a second lily borrowing its title from the Greek mythology, but why the goddess of the rainbow has been made to bestow her name on the purple or yellow iris, splendid as the flower is, I am puzzled to explain. The name corn-flag applied to the iris is said to arise from the corncrake's finding a hiding-place in the plant.

Another lily having a very different nature, the lily of the valley, hiding her bells in the great green leaves which seek the shade of the garden wall, is as subtly fragrant as the dusky violet. I am anxious to avoid promiscuous quotation, with

which I could easily overload my little book ; but I cannot resist giving the description of the lily of the valley, which is so true and graphic in its idealization :—

“ The naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of her tremulous bells are seen
Through their pavilions of tender green.”



IRIS.



LILY OF THE VALLEY.

The lily of the valley is “the May-flower” of Germany, the sweetest blossom of the forest.

The wallflower of the garden has undergone a considerable metamorphosis in point both of size and colour. It acquires often the circumference of a small bush. Its leaves are twice as broad and as long again. Its yellow petals are not merely

“Stained with iron-brown,”

they have become altogether brown, a deep red brown, nearly

black in an approved double kind, which in the midland counties of England is named "Bleeding Hearts," and recalls the cognizance of the house of Douglas from the time that the heart of the Bruce was intrusted to gentle Lord James to carry to the Holy Land. Most people know how the incorrigible fighter, in fulfilling his obligation, turned aside to encounter



WALLFLOWER.

the Moors in Spain, and in the battle in which he found himself surrounded by the enemy, rose in his stirrups, plucked the silver casket containing his treasure from his breast, and flinging it far in advance, cried, "Go on before, as thou wert wont, good heart, and Douglas will follow thee or die!" and pushing after it, was slain; so it was left for Lockhart of Lee to bring it back sorrowfully and bury it in native earth. But

it may not be to this bleeding heart, rather to others meeker in their secret wounds, that the name refers. However, the same wallflower is called in the south of England "Bloody Warriors," the bestowers of the epithet always having regard to the resemblance to clotted blood possessed by this variety of wallflower. The wallflower, it should be added, is one of the *Crucifera* or Cross-bearers. Most of them are useful, and none of them are poisonous.

The hyacinth of the garden is much larger and more luxuriant, without even a pretence to constancy of colour,* while it has lost all the grace of the wild-flower. It has a strong flavour of a Dutch "grower" in its rounded bulk and absolute formality. That does not prevent it from coming down to us as an ancient symbol of death and immortality. There are few more touching and inspiring incidents than that recorded of the mummy of the Egyptian princess found with a hyacinth root clasped in the tanned blackened semblance of the slender hand. The flower had rested in silence and darkness for more than a thousand years, but when it was put into earth again, and felt once more the kindly influence of the sun and rain, it sent forth its green shoot as faithfully and gladly as if it had sprung and blossomed every year that it had lain in the tomb. God do so, and more also, to the human germs hidden in the dust.

• Burns wrote—

" The hyacinth for constancy,
Wi' its unchanging blue ; "

yet even the wood hyacinth is not always blue, it is sometimes pinkish-lilac or pure white in colour.

William Hunt, the great water-colour painter, painted the hyacinth, taking a fortnight to reproduce lovingly the single flower which, as he said, he was almost frightened to begin to copy.

One of the gayest, most varied and beautiful of spring garden flowers is the anemone, the cultivated wind-flower, purple, white, and blood-red. A cruel attempt has been made to spoil it by over-cultivation into a double flower, but where the single species is preserved it has not many equals for lightness, brightness, and fine contrast of colour. The more elegant, but not so brilliant wild wood-anemone is no doubt the progenitor of its garden descendant. At the same time there are red field-anemones in abundance in Palestine, particularly in the neighbourhood of the little town of Nazareth. There is also a tradition that the garden anemone was brought from the east of Europe, probably Bohemia or Poland, and that the seeds were obtained by an ingenious stratagem pardonable under the circumstances. A rich Englishman travelling abroad was greatly charmed by the beds of anemones which he saw in the garden of a noble host to whom the stranger was paying a visit. He proposed—in the most delicate manner, let us hope—to buy a supply of seed, but the host or his gardener proved churlish, and absolutely refused the request. The Englishman was not to be balked. He watched his opportunity, and took occasion to indulge in a stroll in the garden, wearing a short velvet mantle, at the season when the anemones were covered with their downy seeds. He was watched, but that did not hinder him from dropping his cloak as if by accident near the

garden beds, picking it up and wrapping it negligently round his arm. I need not say he carried off, sticking to the velvet pile, enough seeds to enrich the English gardens of the future.

The ranunculus, twin-brother to the anemone, was certainly brought from the East, some say by the Crusaders when Richard the Lion-hearted met a worthy foe in the chivalrous Sultan Saladin. One description of the ranunculus, and one only, of a tawny orange colour, has a delicate delicious



TULIP.

perfume. The anemone has to a great extent superseded the ranunculus; the sweet-smelling yellow ranunculus especially is almost everywhere a flower of the past.

Tulips are more Dutch than hyacinths, and in their striped, parti-coloured parrot gorgeousness recall the commercial mania in which the root figured and in which fortunes were ruined, heads turned, and hearts broken by the score. The eccentric genius Oliver Goldsmith, coming home from Holland at the height of the speculation, invested the little money he

had been intrusted with, on behalf of his friends, in a few bulbs. The friends, we read, made wry faces when he presented his purchases.

A pleasanter association even than with Dutch canals, and substantial Dutch summer-houses, is that which links the tulip with the old quaint gardens that came into England with Dutch William, and culminated in the garden at



HAWTHORN.

Hampton Court laid out under the personal superintendence of William's loving wife Mary.

The Germans show a proper appreciation of the tulip when they name it the Turkish lily.

The white thorn or hawthorn of May retains a balmy memory of old English May-days, May-poles, and May-queens, when these were not theatrical representations of bygone usages, but honest, earnest, contemporary customs and sports.

The lilac, with its dove-coloured plumes, and the laburnum, "dropping wells of fire," the richest and most brilliant of our

blossoming shrubs, form marked features of English gardens ; yet, strange to say, they are largely destitute of historical or sentimental associations.

A whole host of early summer flowers, sweet, simple, and hardy in their natures, pithy, pleasant, and comical in their titles, claim our attention. Among these are bachelors' buttons, daintiest of little flowers in white, a trifle vulgar in yellow, and huge crimson peony roses, once known as fit-roses. But the terror which the name inspired was quite misplaced, and arose from a misapprehension ; for instead of the scent of the flower producing a swoon in the rash man or woman dabbing an inquisitive nose into every blossom, a preparation of the root of the peony was held at one time to be efficacious in curing a formidable evil to which flesh is heir.

There is greater cause for dread of the purplish-blue monk's-hood with its sombre air. It is a cowed flower, which children call "carriages," from a still more precise observation of its formation. By pulling up the hood—not unlike the hood of a phaeton—there is disclosed, not a tonsured head or frocked figure, but several long stamens bent into a sitting position, similar to that assumed by the occupants of a carriage. Monk's-hood with its dark-green indented leaves, and its gloomily though not luridly coloured clusters of flowers, is a deadly poison. To swallow a single leaf has been found enough to poison a child. The disastrous mistake of an ignorant cook who substituted the root of monk's-hood for that of parsnip in preparing a dinner for a party of gentlemen in

Inverness-shire, killed three of the guests in as many hours, and converted the house of feasting into the house of mourning.

Though the monk's-hood of the cottage garden is a "most noble flower in seeming," its rank poisonous qualities make it



MONK'S-HOOD.

undesirable. Yet the old herbalists had a good deal to say in its favour. Gerarde regards the "munkeshade" as being good against the stings of scorpions, and "so forcible that the herb only thrown before the scorpion, or any other venomous beast, causeth them to be without force or strength to hurt, insomuch that they cannot moove or stirre vntill the herbe be taken away." Clearly a principle of homœopathy, the

casting out of one poison by the presence of another, was in these days in some degree understood.

A much safer favourite of children is a sort of cultivated purple knapweed. They pull out the petals, and call the round leathery foundation in which they have been inserted "cheeses."

Canterbury bells, white as well as purple, represent a tall, flourishing, handsome flower, the great bells of which, compared to the blossoms of the smaller campanula, are as Tom of Lincoln or Big Ben matched with a handbell. Undoubtedly the flower has an ecclesiastical suggestion, but why Canterbury more than any other cathedral? As for Turk-upon-Turk, where the misformed purple bells cluster closely in a suc-

cession of rings to the flower-stalk, the name must have been given after the battle of Belgrade.

A little plant with a leaf like that of a houseleek is not only beautiful exceedingly, when its tiny forests of brown stalks and its abundance of feathery pink flowers are closely examined, it is provided with a complete series of characteristic names descriptive of its dainty, demure dignity, its fine finish, even the comparative coarseness of its leaf. It is called "none-so-pretty-as-me," the assertion meant to be delivered with a simper and a curtsy, and with no reproach to the speaker's grammar, since the "me" thus applied was still perfectly grammatical in the old-fashioned days in which the flower was christened. Another name is "London pride," arguing that no belle so perfect could have come out of any town inferior to the metropolis, though it must have been a different London in which this pride could prosper, modern London with its smoke proving fatal to the wellbeing of the plant which is so common and hardy in the wholesome country. "Queen Anne's needlework," the third English name, and the French name "*passe-peintre*," refer alike to the quality of delicate minuteness so conspicuous in the plant. The slightly taunting title which ungallantly recalls the homeliness of the leaf is, strange to say, a product of Irish wit. But perhaps Paddy meant no harm when he dubbed the "darlint" "St. Patrick's cabbage."



HOUSELEEK.

A white flower of the saxifrage order, remarkable for the frosted silvery look of its leaves, has also a redundancy of names. The error which, in spite of Shakespeare's description,



LONDON PRIDE.

calls it "love-in-idleness," is certainly a confusion with "love-in-a-mist;" a still prettier definition is "Summer Snow." But the old name is "the powdered beau." While we write *Lovelace* and *Sir Charles Grandison* rise up before us, alighting from coaches and six, bowing with unapproachable dignity and grace, laying their white hands on the lace cravats hanging in front of their villainous or heroic hearts, and we must call back "none-so-pretty-as-me" to stand as the floral representative of the magnificent beaux' companion ladies, the *Harriet Byrons* and *Clarissa Harlowes* in their pink satin sacques and white lutestring paduasos.

The gillyflower, which Hood once called "the silly little gilly," is a sweet purple, red, or white flower, owing its name to a corruption of *July*. In its double variety of "stock" it is more valued. White stock has a peculiarly pallid effect, from the absence of the more or less conspicuous yellow stamens generally found in the centre of white flowers. A pensive air is thus

lent to the flower, and it has been frequently used in the last service flowers can render us, to lie on the death-pillow and rest on the coffin. It may be this distinction which has caused it to be copied with great feeling by the French flower-painter Fantin de la Tour.



SWEET PEA.

Sweet pea is a significant and sufficient name. The flower has been a great favourite. The everlasting pea, which is larger and more showy, while it lacks the purple variety of the annual, has some of the disadvantages of everlasting flowers. It objects to being rooted out as the others object to fade. It is scentless, like another improvement (?) on the old annual, which was so little appreciated that it received the contemptuous

name which is applied without any jibe to a butterfly, "the painted lady." Sweet peas were commonly employed in old embroidery, to which their curves and tendrils lent themselves lovingly.

Gardeners' garters is the older and much more picturesque name of the green-and-white-striped ribbon-grass.

There are flowers which have a mercenary flavour, such as the gold and silver rods. These have a Biblical ally in Aaron's rod. Jonah's gourd, with Jonah in the shape of a thick black pistil reposing in a floral envelope, has also borrowed its significance from the Old Testament.

Asphodel of a fine bronze and green colour, as well as of a gauzy white texture, brings a reminiscence of the Elysian fields of the ancients.

Everlastings or immortelles of all sorts, white, red, and yellow, stiff and bristling, having lost nearly every flower-like grace, along with their inability to fade, are largely employed in chaplets, which ingenuity has only lately redeemed from utter ugliness, to lay on graves. Such memorials, which appear to have been originally designed with a view to saving trouble rather than anything else, are singularly inappropriate in spite of the name. They have, save in exceptional instances, as little claim to what constitutes the true beauty and charm of natural flowers as a mummy has to represent a living man or woman. Such immortality as they possess belongs to inferior and not to superior attributes, and is a loss rather than a gain. The common immortelles are only surpassed in hard hideousness by the black-and-white bead

chaplets with which the Germans disfigure their God's acres.

Worth a hundred immortelles are the dusky blue spikes of the lavender, which, even after they have crumbled into dust, still breathe forth sweetness like the memory of the good and true.*

There is a garden daisy which is quite distinct from the Marguerite of Faust. It is a double flower, snowy white or rosy red, with a large round honest face, which is almost as lovable as the bright modest little face of its field namesake, and which, like it, is to be seen for the most of the year. One of these garden daisies propagates itself by throwing out a circle of little daisies round the parent flower after the fashion of Jupiter's starry rings. This variety is not inaptly named the hen-and-chickens daisy.



LAVENDER.

There are old-fashioned garden flowers named for virtues

* The musk plant is next to lavender for widespread popularity of perfume. Southernwood, balm, rosemary or cost-mary, the last an old accompaniment of the chamber of death, are more pungent than sweet. There is a picturesque custom in some parts of Wales with regard to Palm Sunday, which is there called "Flowering Sunday." During the previous week the graves in the churchyards are all put in order. They are then covered with the sweetest and brightest flowers the surviving relatives can find. Men and women will come from great distances, and after intervals of many years spent in the colonies, to "flower" their parents' or kindred's graves according to the old loving rite.

which have perhaps become a little old fashioned also. Such are "honesty," a tall, bold, somewhat bumptious purple flower, and "humility," a little creeping thing, content with the scanty soil of walls, over which it hangs displaying its small lilac, white, and yellow flowers in such abundance that another old name for the plant is "mother of thousands."

Larkspur is a pretty winged flower, lilac or white for the most part, with a tasselled leaf as well as a tasselled blossom, associated with the claw of a favourite bird.

Lupins are also purple or white, growing in the perennial flower to a great height, with a fine wheel-like leaf and a pea-shaped blossom. Men and women have linked the flower unkindly with the villainous wolf, unexcused by such a reason as obviously exists in the peculiar shape and floury whiteness of the leaves of the auricula, which the French call bears' ears. Lupins may either please or poison wolves. I incline to the last solution. But I hold the opposite explanation of "goats' leaves," the name which the same French neighbours give to honeysuckle, with its straw-coloured and crimson sweet pipes, on which we have fixed as the *raison d'être* for our title. Old Izaak Walton was fond of the honeysuckle hedge, under which he was in the habit of taking shelter from showers.

The tiger lily—strange name for a member of the lily tribe—is another flower which has to do with an animal. There is no misunderstanding the association here. The splendid colouring, well marked with black, bears an evident resemblance to the colour and marking of a tiger's skin. There is no such gorgeous depth of orange to be found in any other

old-fashioned flowers, if you except the plant—of the lily race also—which bears in the vulgar tongue the burlesquely sensational title of “the red-hot poker,” and the marigold. The name of the tiger lily has caused it to be pressed into the service of sensational novelists, a more welcome link is that which connects the grand innocent old flower with a friend of John Milton’s.

Pheasant’s eye is a pretty star-like, bright brown flower answering well to the shy brown eye of the game-bird.

The lip of the snap-dragon is supposed to resemble the jaw of the legendary and heraldic monster. The likeness is doubtless increased by a sprinkling of yellow pollen like sulphur round the flower’s mouth. But the picture is all dumb-show. Snap-dragon does not spit fire or swallow up the beholder.

It is not even poisonous. I need not say it lends its alarming name to the merry old Christmas game when raisins are snatched fearfully from the blue flames of burning brandy. The plant is not too particular about soil, and in a wild state, like wallflower, consents to crown old walls; but it reserves its deepest richest red and finest streaks for garden beds.



SNAP-DRAGON.

The common people in several countries believe this plant to possess a supernatural power of destroying charms and taking the effect from curses.

Snap-dragon has an interest beyond its rich and striking aspect, as having supplied Mr. Darwin with one of his most effective illustrations in his work on the "Fertilization of Plants." "One or two holes," he says, "have been made on the lower side, close to the little protuberance which represents the nectary, and therefore directly in front of and close to the spot where the nectar is secreted;" and the bees, when they cannot push past the projecting lip, gain access to the honey by this means, and in doing so touch the stamens, and become dusted with pollen, which they carry away.

There was an old garden flower which, like the deep blue and white convolvulus, and with more cause, is now conspicuous by its absence from modern gardens. This was a straggler from the fields, a larger species of the red-and-white herb-willow, which some wag of a gardener had termed for its restless intrusiveness "wandering willow." On Scotch lips the words were naturally corrupted into the "wandering Willie" of one of the most wistfully gentle and arch of old Scotch songs—

"Here awa', there awa', wandering Willie,
Here awa', there awa', haud awa' hame."

The carnation, which derives its name from its flesh tint, has other names, native and foreign. One of these, the pink, has originated the old verb to pink or scallop, and the phrase

“pink of perfection.” It was the favourite flower of a perfect English gentleman, Colonel John Hutchinson.

Mignonette, though it is now called *réséda* by the French, is said to have been named by Napoleon’s soldiers, who first saw it in their disastrous campaign in Egypt. Inhaling its delicious fragrance, they cried out in ecstasy, “mignonette!” (“little darling!”)

As there are a few plants which are said to grow only in the



MUSK.

wake of the white man, so the musk grows best and reaches its fairest proportions, not in the garden or in its native haunts, but in the windows of the cottages of poor people, where it is often not only a sweetener of foul and stagnant air, but a power to refresh and to cheer weary hearts, and not seldom sick and prostrated workers. A good authority says :—

“Though common musk is to be found in every garden, its proper home seems to be the cottage window ; and assuredly the cottagers appear to know best how to grow it, if we may

judge by the buxom specimens that we meet with in exhibitions of window flowers."

The starry jessamine* carries us back to the mediæval times and the story of Jasmin the troubadour, who doubtless sang his songs with clear voice and free beneath his lady's window like the rest ; but who was fain to carry the honour of his



JASMINE.

paternity very far back, even to Jesse—"the stem of Jesse"—of which he boasted that his cognomen was a branch, and there is good reason to believe that in very ancient times the jasmine or jessamine was held for a symbol.

Venus's looking-glass is an odd name for a little lilac flower which has no particular affinity to a looking-glass, and nothing to remind its gatherer of the radiant Aphrodite.

* "Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves."—HOOD.

"Genteel geranium" is a modern out-of-doors flower. The fact is shown by the name given to the gay scarlet variety which is now so common. It was borrowed from no more venerable a personage than the popular dwarf whose renown far outshone for a day the fame of the unfortunate painter Benjamin Haydon. Perhaps the best-known earlier geranium, which was a house-plant, was called "Fair Helen," in reference to Helen of Troy. The blossom was lilac and white, with a velvety-brown centre.

But the old gardens were not destitute of rich and brilliant red flowers in addition to their red roses. There were cocks-combs, which borrowed their title from the crest of chanticleer when he struts to and fro in a rage; and "love-lies-bleeding," a pretty play on the long drooping blood-red plumes of the flower, while a clever change of the name when the same flower held its plumes erect converted it into "prince's feather."

Balsams were then, as now, of a mottled red or purple and white, in tufted flowers which jostled each other in their anxiety to appear, with stalks waxlike, semi-transparent in their fragility. The balsam might represent the mild and gentle peacemaker who brought healing for each wound.

The former standard autumn flowers, before the days of giant dahlias with all the pigmy "bedding-out plants," consisted mainly of hollyhocks, sunflowers, asters, and marigolds. Hollyhocks have nothing whatever to do with holly. They own their title to a corruption of the old name for mallows, the tribe to which the hollyhock belongs. It is a magnificent flower, and though it has always condescended to cottage gardens, it has been a voluntary condescension. It

belongs by right to such terraces as those of Windsor and Versailles. Kings and queens, with their attendant princes and princesses, ought to promenade in alleys of hollyhocks.

Let me say a word for the sunflower, which has always been in such favour for art decoration. No wonder, for save the lily of the Annunciation, there is no flower which lends



SUNFLOWER.

itself so readily to fine conventional effects as the hardy flower, regal in its hardihood, superb in its simple colouring, turning its great flaunting rays—apt to be ragged, no doubt—to the lord of day, presenting its huge brown disc as unwinkingly as its namesake when no clouds temper the blaze.

The aster, the star of the ground, lit up the fading drooping garden when other flowers were perishing before the first touch of the frost.

The marigold is one of the many flowers, of which scarcely any are left in the garden, which were sacred to the Virgin. As in the case of the sunflower, it was eagerly copied by early artists with reason, both for its good shape and glow of colour. The last quality is still prized by dark-haired, brown-skinned Provençal women, who love to stick the flower in their hair behind the ear, where it “gleams like fire.” The African variety is scarcely so gorgeous as the French, but it has a velvety softness in its contrasted yellow

and brown which might make it the Breughel among flowers. Our old cooks and herbalists had an honourable place for the marigold in their dishes and decoctions.

The marigold, though it may be regarded as flaunting, has received its character and credit from qualities not usually associated with show. It stands for constancy. It is a sun-



MARIGOLD.

flower, turning its leaves toward the sun, hence the significance attached to it.

“ The grateful and obsequious marigold
Most duly, ev’ry morning, she displays
Her open brest, when Titan spreads his rayes ;
Observes him closely in his daily walk,
Still bending towards him her slender stalke ;
And when he down declines, she droops and mournes,
Bedewed (as ’twere) with teares, till he returnes.”

There is one garden flower named in honour of the Divine Son of Mary which lingers on, bearing its ivory-white or deep purple blossoms, till autumn. It is the Passion-flower, in the blossom of which devout souls have seen a reproduction of the halo and the crown of thorns. Indeed, I believe, enthusiasts have imagined they detected in other portions of the flower indications of the nails, the reed, and the sponge. It is but a superstitious fancy, no doubt, but it is a reverent and tender superstition which views, blossoming yearly in the unconscious



PASSION-FLOWER.

flower, the tokens of the world's Deliverer, and the great deliverance He wrought.

We are told that the earliest Passion-flower introduced to the Old World is *Passiflora incarnata*, in 1629, from North America; but the universal favourite, *P. cærulea*, was not known here till 1699, and it came from Brazil. "Hence," says a good authority, "it is vain to expect a pre-Reformation example of this genus. Yet from the pertinacity with which decorators use this flower, especially at Eastertide, it is evident that they assume it to have been a sacred emblem." I have been told the following is the interpretation given to the various

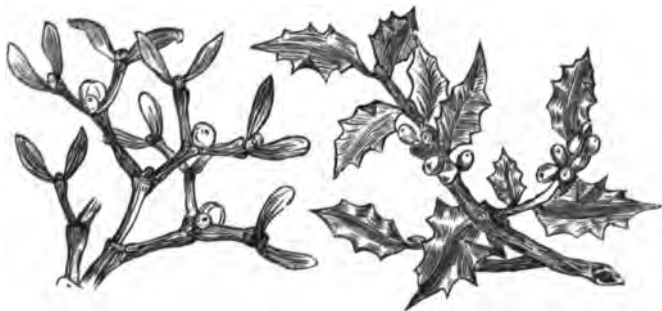
parts of the flower : The columnella is typical of the scourging-post ; the ten petals and three sepals, the thirteen apostles ; the five stamens, the five wounds ; and the three stigmas, the nails. The crown of thorns is represented by the inner circle of rays, and the crown of glory by the larger circle ; while the leaves are emblematic of the open hand that struck the blow ; and the tendrils, the scourges and bonds. Some authority, erroneous though it be, must exist for the widespread application of the flower. And this, it seems, is the *rose-en-soleil*, the favourite badge of Edward IV., and used so repeatedly by him and his partisans.

We have come, in my brief chronicle, to winter, which had even fewer flowers for old than for modern English gardens. Still there was a version of chrysanthemums, one of the gold flowers, according to the signification of its name. Probably chrysanthemums held originally by yellow in colour, for the great variety and wonderful perfection to which the charming November flower has since been brought by well-deserved cultivation, was not then attained.

At last we reach Christmas roses, which, alas ! are only a loving, welcoming name to the cold, white, earth-stained flower which bears a faint resemblance to a rose, and yet belongs to no family so innocent and delightful, but is the blossom of the poisonous hellebore.

There are beautiful old winter berries besides those of the holly, but the scarlet holly berry, among its glittering, prickly dark-green leaves, is the king of berries. It has become so identified with the rejoicings which converted the mummary of

Yule-tide into the glad celebration of the birth of Christ that it has borrowed the very name of Christmas, by which it is known to the humble population of large towns, even as the hawthorn of ancient May-days and May-garlands is the May.* When that excellent and accomplished gentleman John Evelyn practised landscape-gardening as a pleasant diversion at Sayes Court, while he carried on the manufacture of gunpowder at Wotton as a lucrative speculation and profitable investment,



MISTLETOE AND HOLLY.

the pride of his heart was a holly hedge, at that time almost unknown in England. It was "four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five feet in diameter." He describes its taller standards, "at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral." He boasts, "It mocks the rudest assaults of the weather, beasts, and hedge-breakers." But among the last he does not anticipate the privileged Czar of all the Russias. Peter the Great was then learning shipbuilding under a

* The holly's own name signifies "whole, healthy, religious, set apart for sacred use."

transparent disguise at Deptford. The magnanimous despot visited Sayes Court, when it entered his right noble yet barbarous head to try to drive a wheelbarrow through his host's cherished hedge, and poor Evelyn, who admired the imperial mechanic, had to make a wry face and submit to the outrage.

Holly being thus a corruption of holy, the name was given from its use in some of the early Church festivals, when it was strewed instead of olive branches. Its use at Christmas-time can be traced to the Romans, who dedicated it to Saturn, and employed it largely in the decorations for his festival, held at that time. The early Christians, therefore, whilst quietly celebrating the birth of our Lord, and keeping aloof from the riotous scenes around them, were wont to deck their walls with holly that they might avoid detection and punishment. Holly symbolizes resurrection. Great interest attaches to some holly-trees. In Argyleshire there is a prophecy that when a particular holly-tree near Inverary ceases to exist, and when certain other things shall happen (some of which have already come to pass), "then shall all the Argyle Campbells be destroyed, excepting so many as shall escape on a crooked and lame white horse;" and we learn from *Notes and Queries* that in 1861 "the roots were exposed and loosened by the tide, and that the grandfather of the present Duke of Argyle insisted on an awkward bend being made in the line of public road to avoid the necessity of cutting it down." Near Dilston, in Northumberland, there is a thick holly-bush, consisting of several trees close together, the stems scored with initials and marks, and which is said to have served as a "post office" for

the passage of letters between the rebels and their friends in the troubled times of 1715 and 1745. A curious custom, called "holly-kissing," was kept at Netherwitten on Easter Tuesday a few years ago, and may still be so. The young people, headed by the parish clerk playing the fiddle, betook themselves to a wood, where they gathered holly, with which they afterwards decorated a stone cross in the village, finishing the evening with dancing.

Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is a parasite growing on many trees—the maple, walnut, plum, false acacia, cherry-laurel, Portugal laurel, hawthorn, apple, crab, almond, lime, olive, ash, poplar, willow, pear, elm, fir, larch, oak, and beech. It is most frequently on the apple, and least often on the oak. So seldom indeed is it found on the latter tree that it has been doubted whether it ever attacks it. There are too many authentic instances, however, of its having been seen for this doubt still to exist. Whilst it is found in France, Italy, Greece, and parts of Asia, it is said never to grow in Ireland nor in Devonshire.

Tradition says that this lovely English county by some means incurred the anger of the Druids, who cursed it, and forbade the mistletoe ever to grow there; and I have read that in an orchard lying partly in Somersetshire and partly in Devonshire, mistletoe was to be found plentifully in the Somersetshire part of it, whilst all attempts failed to propagate it in the unlucky county. As to the etymology of the word mistletoe wise men disagree. Prior says it is derived from *mistiltan*, A.S., thus—*mistl*, different; and *tan*, twig; referring

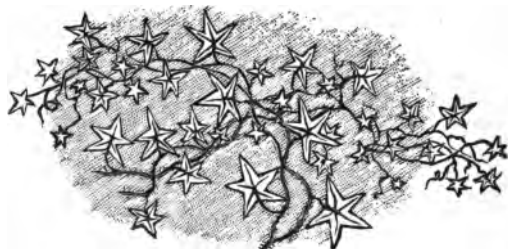
to the difference existing between it and the plant on which it is a parasite. Others assign the name to the manner in which it was supposed to be propagated by means of birds. Thrushes, blackbirds, and ringdoves are said to feed largely on the berries. All know how sacred the mistletoe was to the ancient Britons, and with what solemn ceremonies their priests gathered it, cutting it down with golden sickles, used only for that purpose, and never allowing it to fall to the ground. It was said by the Druids to be the winter home of the fairies, who found under its leaves the shelter they lost when other plants became bare. The priests distributed pieces of it to the people as charms against witchcraft and many diseases. Great calamities were portended when no mistletoe was to be found on the oak ; and it is probable that the reason why the Druids planted apple-trees near their oak-groves was that they might remedy the defaults of nature when it so suited their policy. Shakespeare's mention of it as the "baleful mistletoe" is thought by some to refer to the horrid rites practised by the Druids when they gathered it ; others interpret it to allude to the injurious effect it was supposed to have on the trees to which it fixed itself, or to the belief that the berries were poisonous. When and where the origin of kissing under it arose is unknown, but it has been dated back to the ancient times when it was sacred to Friga, the Saxon goddess of love. At one time a youth could claim a kiss for each berry he plucked from the bush under which he stood with a maiden. Nares says that the maid who was not kissed under the mistletoe at Christmas would not be married that year.

Mistletoe was used in medicine for apoplexy, palsy, and other diseases; and that which grew on the oak was supposed to possess the greatest medicinal virtues, though Culpepper, a quaint old herbalist, says he knows not why, "unless because it is rarest and hardest to come by"—an all-sufficient reason, to Culpepper, to account for the celebrity attained by many remedies. The bark is astringent, but is not now used in medicine. Birdlime is made from the viscid pulp of the fruit.

The ivy, though it is an evergreen, and is good enough to



GROUND IVY.



CLIMBING IVY.

cover rapidly with a wonderfully beautiful mantle many an unsightly old gable and gaunt tree trunk, does not arouse joyous thoughts in men's minds. When Dickens wrote a song on the ivy he made its jollity mocking and sardonic. I am not sure whether we are not inclined to regard the spreading yew—drooping to the ground with its sombre tint even in the sunshine, and its blackness in the shadow—the tree selected to haunt the churchyard, the type of sober, even melancholy age—as on the whole more kindly disposed to humanity than the ivy, which stretches up and shakes its unfading panoply of

green with something of a gibe in our faces, the close embrace of which means slow death in the vegetable world.

Our laurels, stately, if a little stiff, and with something of a brassy polish on their thick leaves, have many associations. I am not required to tell how we have metaphorically plaited crowns of laurels for our heroes, and how "bays" mean, first and chiefly, not indentations of the shore or brown horses, but honours won by the warrior, orator, poet, or painter.

The vegetables are now before us, not the daintier more recently imported kinds, but the common English vegetables, full of common, kindly human allusions. The cabbage, with its rounded bulk and grandly-veined leaves, stands for plain worth and use, like the Christian names John or Jane, and like undecorated broadcloth. There was an ancient Scotch tradition handed down from child to child, quoted by a poet in one of his "Lays," that when the babies of the household first saw the light, they emerged from the hearts of cabbages. For, as everybody knows, cabbages have hearts with centres much valued by the eater.

Beans also belong to a widely-spread nursery legend. With their tall straight stems and broad green pods projecting like the rungs in a ladder, they have been chosen for the scaling machinery in "Jack and the Bean-Stalk." By no other vegetable, though it too had sprung in a night, could Jack have mounted with any show of probability to the giant's stronghold.

We may pause here to inquire why matter-of-fact, respectable vegetables not only flourish largely in children's imaginative lore, but are considered to have such a decided element of

the ludicrous in them, that whenever a practical joke is broadest, or the fun of a pantomime becomes fast and furious, carrots and turnips, vegetable-marrows and pumpkins, are made to fly about to point the joke. It seems a gratuitous slander on the decorous composure of our useful friends.

Greens or kail, furnishing the most beautiful curly leaves of any vegetable which rewards a careful inspection, form the staple vegetable in Scotch cottage gardens, to which they give the name kailyards. The word brings to mind many a primitive, wholesome, not unbeautiful little plot, with the thyme-edged "border" containing a plant of balm—typical of the balm of Gilead, for Sunday or Sabbath use, since then its leaves carried between the boards of the Bible were industriously smelt to keep well-intentioned listeners awake during the worthy minister's longest, deepest, driest discourse—one or two polyanthes or "spinks," a few daffodils, and a couple of rose-bushes, red and white.

When a cottar removes or "flits" from farm to farm, his flitting, if he is a married man, invariably includes a small forest of greens. They bestow a touch of emerald on the otherwise colourless details of the household goods, the deal table, chairs, cradle, and bedstead; on the top of all the mattress, on which the gudewife and her bairns sit, as on an uneasy swaying throne.

I wish I could say that the literal kail or broth, in which a bit of salt pork is quickly boiled, while the vegetable is frequently half raw, is as nourishing and digestible as the French *pot-à-feu* of long preparation.

Greens are also the inseparable accompaniment to a properly-served round of salt beef, while "beef and greens" constitute the true and undegenerated curler's dinner from time immemorial. An ingenious physiologist, the late George Lewes, took pains to prove that the close association of beef and greens, beans and bacon, no less than of bread and butter, and bread and cheese, is in obedience to a wise instinct of the palate, which renders the two articles of diet, in intimate correlation, more wholesome than when eaten separately.

Early peas make the exceedingly agreeable dish which so overcame the Dutch politeness of King William of glorious and immortal memory, that he tarnished his many virtues by the momentary greed of appropriating the whole supply of the vegetable without leaving a pea to his faithful Mary, not to say to his sister-in-law Anne, the more likely of the two to resent the injury. Peas flourish now under many varieties, to which their originators have given a multitude of appropriate and inappropriate names—from "marrow fats," which are said to bring with them their butter, to "Daniel O'Rourke's," which seem to approach us with a flourish of shillelahs.

The leaves of the carrot wither with the loveliest tints. Mrs. Gaskell makes good use of them in a garden scene in one of her novels. Their delicate beauty tempts one to forget the opprobrious connection between the colour of the carrot, nay, the carrot itself, and a certain hue of the human hair. "Carrots" is a term of reproach even more offensive than "Foxy" to the most philosophic street urchin who is so unhappy as to own a shock head of the red adored by artists

and the authors of sensational novels, but despised by the vulgar public.

Onions have a flavour of hypocrisy about them, straightforward as the vegetable is in smell, because of the spurious tears which their cunning application can draw from the driest eye. They are not so honoured as the leek, which is the emblem of a principality, dauntless little Wales. The leek lends its name to a Scotch national dish, the luscious "cock-a-leekie," and originates a phrase "eat your leek," swallow your prejudices without flinching, and own your recantation like a man, publicly.

Potatoes have been already relegated to Sir Walter Raleigh, though there are provoking people who maintain it was the sweet potato, and not that of our dinner-table, which Sir Walter tried to naturalize.

- ♦ Parsley took the place of bays in furnishing the simple crown which was the ostensible reward of a winner in the Greek games. An old Devonshire superstition forbade the planting instead of the sowing of parsley in a garden. If a plant of parsley was planted, then a number of the family would likewise be planted in the earth within the year.

Pumpkins in the hands of Cinderella's fairy godmother furnished on the moment a sumptuous coach for that interesting and amiable heroine.

The mode of pronouncing the name of the cucumber is so varied and disputed that the late Dean Alford felt obliged to prohibit—or did he only threaten to prohibit?—the appearance

of the vegetable on his dinner-table because of the hot arguments it provoked among his pupils. The cucumber figured along with vegetable-marrows and other roots, convenient as missiles, among the offerings which Mrs. Nickleby's mad lover cast at her feet over the garden wall.

The pot-herbs had better be left to appear among wild-flowers in their native habitat, though man has so monopolized sage that it is impossible to think of it apart from an artistic green or from the stuffing of a goose.

The leaves of the strawberry form the emblem and



SEEDLING GOOSEBERRIES.

ornament of a ducal crown. The power of detecting their fragrance while withering away among other decaying vegetation is said to be a sure indication of a high-bred nose and aristocratic descent. The "Caroline" variety of strawberry recalls Horace Walpole's letters, and the "hautboy" brings back the time when water-music was so much in favour that Handel wrote pieces for George II.'s progresses on the Thames.

Gooseberry supplied an impertinent nickname to one of Horace Walpole's two favourites, the Miss Berrys.

Because Mary Berry's eyes procured her the comparatively honourable sobriquet of "Blackberry," poor Agnes, who was no fool, was dubbed, for the sake of distinction, "Gooseberry." It might have reconciled her to the liberty, to think how many visions of notable matrons and deft maidens, as quaintly stately as they were domestic, are linked with the old English dishes of ladies' special preparation, "gooseberry fool" and "syllabub."

The name of the cherry, which has a hundred sweet cheery associations, is said to have originated in a place on the Black Sea, from which it was originally brought. How familiar it has grown since then! How the word lingers on our lips in the old popular song of "Cherry ripe, cherry ripe!" while the colour reminds us of ancient top-knots like those of Farmer Flamborough's daughters. The woman's Christian name, taken from the Grace, "Charity," has been whimsically contracted into "Cherry."

Before the battle of Waterloo, when the detachment of a famous British regiment was sent to occupy a farmhouse and orchard on the field, the men climbed the trees like so many schoolboys to gather the ripe cherries. What cottages and farmhouses at home did they not recall! How many light-hearted cherry-eaters were left when the battle was over?

Apple-blossom is so perfectly beautiful in its flush of pink and white that a great modern painter was content to spend a whole apple-blossoming season in painting it. The writer was at an exhibition of which one of the gems was a sketch of a single bough of apple-blossom from the poet-critic Ruskin's

hand. The fruit of the apple has a venerable character. It is the chosen representation of the forbidden fruit which cost our first parents Paradise. It is the fruit which in its golden varieties formed the treasure of the garden of the Hesperides, and one of the attractions to the Argonautic expedition. It subdued the high purpose of Atalanta. It wrought bitter strife



APPLE-BLOSSOM.

and destruction among gods and men when the false boy Paris presented the apple of discord to Venus, in the act slighting the potent claims of the great rival goddesses Juno and Minerva.

The individual names of many English apples and pears betray their French or Flemish extraction. The Ribston pippin, thoroughly anglicised as it is, or alas! was, retains a trace of one of the King Pepins, just as the pears beurré,

bergamot, jargonelle, and duchesse have all at some time crossed the Channel or the German Ocean from Norman or Flemish orchards. But the codlin is a purely English apple, and so is "lady's fingers," certainly dating farther back than the Reformation, when the Galilean peasant girl whom all nations were to call "blessed" was worshipped as "our Lady."

The little crab, which has furnished an adjective to express the national spleen, is of course of English origin.

The old heirs of Colston, in the Scotch county of East



RED CURRANTS.

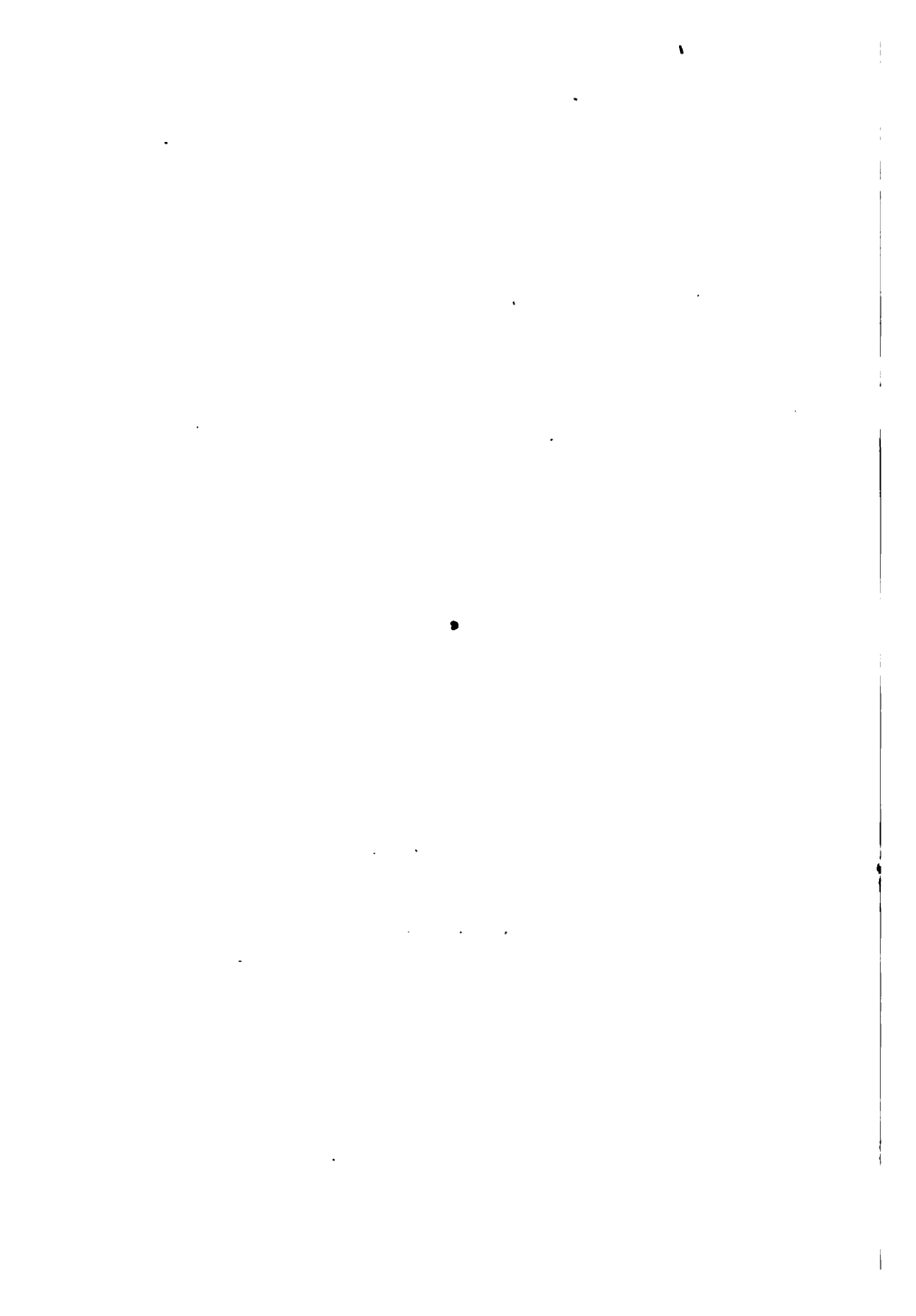
Lothian, possessed a charmed pear known as the Colston pear. It was proof against decay, and so long as the family kept it whole and uninjured, they would flourish. The conditions were the same as those attached to the Cumberland Musgrave's crystal goblet. The wooden-looking pear is kept to this day by the representatives of the Colstons in a glass case, under lock and key. Once, indeed, a gay daughter of the house, a laughing beauty, defiant as beauties will be, seized her opportunity. But she was caught, and arrested in the sacrilegious outrage, before she had done more than put two of her pretty teeth in the pear, and, to be sure, her father lost, by a lawsuit, that

year two of the finest farms which had belonged to the estate.

It was on a dish of peaches combined with draughts of strong ale that King John made his last fatal feast. It is edifying to notice how, as one rises in the scale of rank in fruit, the associations with nobility and royalty thicken. Thus we have the King William pear, the Reine Claude peach or nectarine, and the Victoria plum, and so on *ad infinitum*.

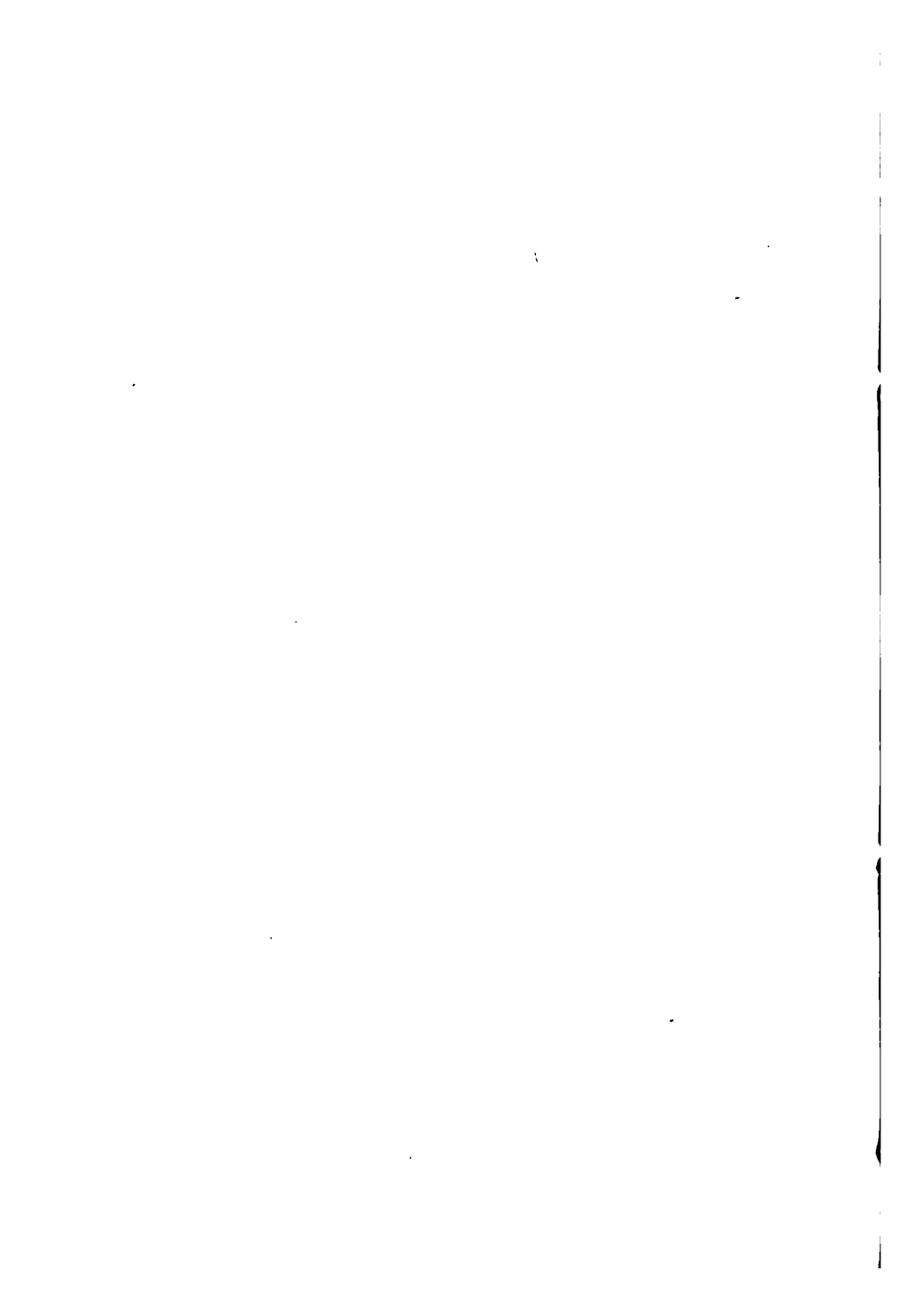


INDIAN CRESS.



CHAPTER VII.

Among the Wild-flowers.



CHAPTER VII.

AMONG THE WILD-FLOWERS.



HERE are at least two national and historic wild-flowers—

“ The rough bur-thistle spreading wide,
Auld Scotia's emblem dear,”

and the shamrock, with its beautiful heart-shaped leaves.

There is not a goodlier or grander wild-flower than a fine thistle with its great amethyst boss and its complete panoply of prickles and leaves. But it must be confessed that it is not pleasant to pull, and that it is a very curse in agriculture—an instrument in the fulfilment of the old punishment “thorns also and thistles shall it [the ground] bring forth to thee.” A half-pathetic, half-humorous story is told of an old Scotchman called Sandy Mackay who was settled in one of the divisions of Australia. He conceived such a longing for a living, growing Scotch thistle that he sent home for the seed, and sowed it carefully and lovingly in his garden plot. Sandy's importation took kindly to the soil, and the downy seeds were carried by the wind far and wide, till the plant became as great a pest in the southern as in the northern hemisphere. Sandy's punishment consists in the fact

that the thistle struggles for mastery in the new empire under the fresh title of "Sandy Mackay's Curse."

Everybody knows the pretty superstition of the four-leaved shamrock with its power of conferring the gratification of the wish of its fortunate finder. Has the legend anything to do with the holy (?) blood-spot on the leaves of one species of the plant?

The earliest spring wild-flowers are also the commonest, and may be found, for that matter, all the year round. In open winters the pinched, fair face of the daisy is rarely absent.



DAISIES.

The same thing may be said of dandelions, groundsel, and chickweed.

The daisy was Chaucer's delight, and he punned on it as the day's-eye. Wordsworth claimed it, as well as the celandine and the daffodil, for his own. Goethe, because of its French name, Marguerite, gave it to poor Gretchen, and Burns of all poets has described the

" Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower "

with the most tender reverence and grateful pensive grace. Though the daisy seldom forsakes us, she is the flower of May in northern pastures, and Scotch children say when you can

cover with one footprint nine May gowans or daisies then summer has come.

By the number of long-drawn breaths required to scatter the downy seed of one "head" of dandelion, cottage children profess to tell the hour on the clock.

We are told* that groundsel and chickweed are weeds which are only found in the track of civilization, and that "the wild man of the woods" calls chickweed "the pale man's footsteps." Both plants supply food in abundance for caged birds. The sale of groundsel and chickweed is positively a lucrative occupation to the humblest description of costermonger in London. Evidence was given lately in a law court to prove that a good bird's-meat "beat" was well worth the yearly income of a learned German professor or gallant officer who had fought for the Fatherland.



CHICKWEED.

It has been stated of the Roman nettle, it is such a close follower of man, that wherever it is discovered you may look for a human habitation, entire or in ruins, in the vicinity. In spite of the social instincts thus implied, the sight of the dark, dingy, stinging nettle filling up a roofless enclosure, and waving above a cold, shattered hearthstone, does not conduce to cheerfulness. It reminds the gazer of the old terrible prophetic denunciations which consigned splendid palaces and populous towns to the owl and the bat, the bittern and the cony.

* The Rev. Dr. Hugh Macmillan.

The explanation of the epithet Roman, though it sounds highly apocryphal, is livelier. The proud invaders of the little island of Great Britain had heard such tales of the rigour of the climate that they came provided, like Sandy Mackay, with the seed of the aggressive plant, from which they raised a growth of vicious leaves. The Romans' object was, in case of any benumbing influence, to sting their skins to life again by rubbing them with nettles. The comfortable belief of my childhood was that the acrimonious, offending nettle always grew side by side with the mild, consoling dock, so that the poison and the antidote were never apart. Perhaps the Romans knew this agreeable truth also, and intermitted their application of nettles for a counter-application of docks.

Dock leaves instead of cabbage leaves were in great request with old-fashioned country-people, that they might wrap in their cool dark folds the pounds of fresh buff-coloured butter to be carried to market.

Another use of the kindly humble dock was to solace the parched, burning skin, covering nothing save bones, of poor sick men and women in the last stage of illness.

Among the real spring wild-flowers, that is, those which do not cover the four seasons and linger through the winter, the foremost place is due to primroses and cowslips. Primroses, however fair, are always pale and sad in poets' eyes. One poet has even gone the length of saying "the widowed primrose, weeping to the moon." The stiff old English name was used not only as a surname in the case of the

worthy vicar of Wakefield, and in the noble Scotch house of Rosebery, it was also employed occasionally as a Christian name for girls in Scotland. Primrose was the name of the last wife of the notorious Lord Lovat. She did not fare any better because of her near relationship to the wily old Jacobite. He kept her in such strict durance in his Highland home that it was only by enclosing a letter in a ball of thread and flinging it from a window to one of the few passers-by, who proved a faithful ally, and conveyed the communication to



PRIMROSES.

the poor lady's kindred in Edinburgh, that the closely-kept prisoner procured her release. The delight of finding the first primrose of the season is charmingly described by Miss Mitford in "Our Village."

Cowslips, whether from their connection with so philosophic an animal as the cow, whether because they affect the open breezy downs, while primroses, like violets, love the shelter of hedgerows and the shade of woods, have not the same atmosphere of sadness. They are supposed to ring their little streaked and spotted bells merrily in the wind, to contribute

with all their hearts to form the sweet ball which children love to toss from hand to hand, and to help willingly to brew one of the pleasantest and oldest of native wines.

The tiny sweet purple and white violets of our hedgerows are not the imperial flower, but something better.

Cold steel-blue, or white, or dusky-purple periwinkles star our spring banks. The plant is said to be named from its



SWEET VIOLET.



WILD PANSY.

propensities as one of the bindweeds. Yet if the blossom is narrowly examined, the petals may be seen to incline in a whorl which is not without a resemblance to the curl of the sea-whelk, one of the names of which the flower shares. I have a rebellious impression that the frequent sea-blue of the colour, together with the involution of the petals, provoked some ingenious person to liken the flower to the marine animal, and to name it accordingly.

The clustering white "Star of Bethlehem" grows wild in

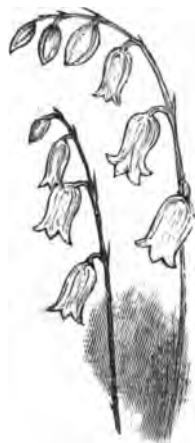
some parts of England, and is named in honour of that star of the east which heralded the birth of the Saviour.

I have already written of the hyacinth, which fills the woodlands with a misty blue. Many English people call it the bluebell to the puzzled bewilderment of their Scotch neighbours, in whose old songs the harebell invariably figures as the bluebell. The last, which blossoms in late summer and not in spring, represents

“ The bluebells of Scotland,
The bonnie bluebells,”

as dear as thistles themselves to the hearts of patriotic natives. The name hyacinth has its origin in a Greek fable which describes the plant as sprung from the blood of a handsome youth slain by the envious god Apollo. The name has been given freely as a Christian name both to men (in France) and to women, under the fanciful abbreviation of Cinthia, which the moon too enjoys.

But the lily of lilies among wild-flowers is the great summer water lily, white or yellow, which flourishes alike in bleak Highland lochs and soft reaches of the Thames. Beautiful as is its stainless cup made up of snowy or golden pointed leaves, there is something uncanny, a suspicion of Undine or a kelpie, which imaginative people recognise in the water lily. It courts observation, and yet it shows a desperate unwillingness to be



HYACINTH.

pulled, a cruel desire to drag down its would-be captor to a watery grave.

Even the little water ranunculus is not free from alarming inconsistency and deception in its character. It shoots up one kind of broad honest-looking leaf to float openly on the surface of the pond or brook, while it retains quite another, narrow and grassy, fit for any amount of entanglement, to grow more or less hidden beneath the water. Could any perfectly



WATER LILIES.

harmless, single-hearted plant behave in such a perplexing fashion?

Among the fine variety of wild irises there is a dwarf kind of evil odour which replaces its flower by two rows of brilliant red berries. Children call them, in compliment to their brave show, "lords-and-ladies."

In June the lovely wild-flower veronica (or *speedwell*) flourishes by sunny hedgerows and dyke-sides, and in open spaces in the woods. It is sky-blue, not sea-blue, with the distinct white spot in the centre to which it owes its name; for it is a living memo-

rial of the saintly story of the compassionate Jewish woman who, seeing the Lord toiling along the *Via Dolorosa*, staggering under the weight of His cross, with the sweat-drops hanging on His forehead, offered Him her blue handkerchief, and received it back with the miraculous print of the Divine face in the centre. The little veronica thus owns a solemn and piteous legend. The word is from the Greek, and means a "sacred picture." The handkerchief, superstitiously believed to have belonged to St. Veronica, was preserved at St. Peter's, in Rome. A story is told of Rousseau that the sight of a tuft of speedwell on the spot where he had sat with a dear friend thirty years before blooming exactly as it had done then, made him turn away weeping bitterly.* The speedwell has had an important position in rustic medicine, and it has been used as a substitute for tea. The Emperor Charles V. used it for gout, and old Gerarde recommends it for cancer. The woman's Christian name of Veronica was imported from Holland into Scotland, and was borne by the wife of Boswell of Auchinleck, the devoted chronicler of Dr. Johnson.



YELLOW VETCH.

The vetches, yellow and purple, with such characteristic definitions as crows' toes and Lady's fingers, follow suit. The most handsome, the tangled purple vetch of the hedges, far outshines the flower of the tares of the field. The last—be it

* Hibberd's "Brambles and Bayleaves."

from the fault of our English translation of the Bible—has an unhappy signification to us, as symbolizing “the children of the wicked one.”

The yellow butterfly-flower of the broom, before which Lin-næus knelt, praising God that he had seen it, is great in Scotch songs, while the apricot-scented, golden blossom of the whin or furze, which is always in season, is nowhere in this respect.

With the full growth of the meadow grass and corn come a



MARSH MARIGOLD.



FLAX.

host of flowers. The buttercup and kingcup not only tell by the depth of shadow they cast on our chins the extent to which we love butter—literal and figurative, they powder our boots with yellow dust as fashionable ruffs were once dyed with saffron. The marsh marigold is a larger, more glorious buttercup. Marsh marigolds are called “brides of the sun” in Italy. They have the very different name of “crazy Betties” in some parts of England.

The Lady’s smock, most quaintly named of flowers, rearing its

peach-white blossoms, is another of the Virgin's flowers. So is Lady's mantle with its shrouding leaf, and Lady's bedstraw with its innumerable yellow or white crosses.* A contemporary is the red sorrel, which lends a warm tinge to green commons, and is one of the few things which has a horsy tone without objection.

A rare and fine poetic association has been given to the blue flower of the flax. Longfellow says of the skipper's little daughter in his fine poem of "The Wreck of the Hesperus:"—

" Her eyes were blue as the fairy flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day."

One of the plantains has tall stalks with black, light-green, or lilac heads, sometimes scented. These are called by children "cocks and hens," and a game is played with them in which the tough stalks of the flowers serve to switch off the heads of their opponents.

One of the champions, rather a ditch than a hedge variety, has its rosy petals cut up and flying in every direction, and bears the picturesque name of "ragged Robin." Surely the original of so charming a vagabond appears in "The House that Jack Built." We know him as

" The man all tattered and torn "

in whom "the maiden all forlorn" found consolation.

Another plant of creeping and spreading proclivities is called "Robin-run-the-hedge."

* The pretty orange and straw coloured flower of the toad-flax is called sometimes by country-people "butter and eggs."

The exquisite little wild geranium braiding turf and stones, with deeply indented leaves of the softest emerald green, fading into olive and richest crimson, and having a small lilac flower, is named herb-Robert. Its other name, crane's bill, is borrowed from the resemblance which the seed-vessel acquires to a bird's beak.

The calyx of the less beautiful of the two white champions



RED CAMPION.

is like a tiny bladder which children can compress and burst with a crackling noise.

The bright blue, myrtle-leaved brook-lime, and not the turquoise-blue speedwell, with a flower very similar in other respects, is held to be the original of that most sentimental of flowers the "forget-me-not." Its legend belongs to Germany. It was a young Teuton who plunged into the river to get the flower she coveted for the girl he loved. As he swam back to the shore, feeling himself sinking he threw the flower by one

great effort at his mistress's feet, calling out to her, "Forget me not," as the sole reward of his service unto death.

The meadow-sweet, or more picturesquely, "queen of the meadow," with its fragrant white feathery tufts, is another flower which loves water.

So does the greater red herb-willow, called inexplicably in old English books "codlins and cream."

The purple corncockle, which has a curiously painted look,



WILD GERANIUM.



FORGET-ME-NOT.

brings into English fields a flavour of the ancient patriarch and Arab sheikh Job.

The lilac scabious has been named the widow's flower in France because the popular Philip Duke of Orleans, son of Louis Philippe, in walking with his wife on the evening before the day when he took the leap from the carbriolet which cost him his life, presented her with this field-flower.

The brilliant bluebottle, which has a charm for all Germans, was the favourite flower of the much-loved Louise Queen of Prussia, and for her sake continues to be specially patronized by the house of Brandenburg.

The still more brilliant scarlet poppy, once called in Scotland the cock-rose, is by a kind of paradox, on account of the opium in its seeds, associated with dull oblivion. Albrecht Dürer's grand figure of Melancolia sits crowned with poppies. The poppy has written its own record in endless tales of pain and sorrow, and the joy of dreams. Coleridge



CORNCOCKLE.



SPEEDWELL.

and Thomas de Quincey have given voice in part to the dumb torture, and helplessness, and ecstasy of its inflictions and inspirations; and the eloquence of the latter has lifted it into classic significance in modern times as in ancient, for the Greeks intimately associated the poppy with Aphrodite or Venus. The drug is obtained, we read, by making slight incisions in the green capsules, the result being that a milky

exudation appears in the line of the wound, and this when scraped off is crude opium. The plant is largely cultivated in India and several other countries of the East, and to some extent in England, for the purpose of making opium.

Valerian has been called "cat's fancy" because of the well-known love borne to it by cats, who, by the way, show a similar affection for the pretty garden annual "nemophila."



POPPY.



PIMPERNEL.

The poisonous wild parsley is somewhat sardonically named fools' parsley.

The little pimpernel, immortalized by Ebenezer Elliot, is the only other scarlet flower in the native flora. It has been called "my grandfather's spectacles" "the poor man's weather-glass," and "the shepherd's clock," because it always closes before a shower, and shuts every day at noon.

The goat's beard, which also closes its petals at noon, receives from country-people the reproachful title of "go-to-bed-at-noon."

A tiny white flower is called from the shape of its seed-vessels "shepherd's purse," or "pockets."

Ox-eye daisies, buglos, which means literally ox's tongue, hoarhound, and harebells, are very different flowers all linked with animals.



HAREBELL.

What the harebell owes its legend to is the story of a watchful shepherd-boy who once heard the flower-bells ringing sweet music. Some say the name is not from the animal, but from the hair-like fragility of the stalk, in which case the word must have been corrupted.* But the airy harebell sways lightly above the close, short turf trodden by hares and rabbits. The harebell is also named from the shape of its bell "St George's helmet." In some parts of England and in France the white variety is called prettily and appropriately "the nun of the fields." The round reflective eye of the ox is easily identified with the great yellow disc of the white daisy; so is the rough tongue of the same animal with the rough leaves of the coarse but effective blue-and-red buglos. The name of dandelion is taken from the supposed resemblance of the leaves of the plant to the *teeth of a lion*. Ox-eyed daisies are called too moon-daisies and horse-gowans. Hoarhound, from which old herbalists distilled a draught to be used in coughs, was also believed to cure the bite of a mad dog.

Among other wild-flowers with names derived from beasts

* St. Peter's Parish Magazine.

and birds, the origin of the title coltsfoot applied to the sweet-scented yellow flower of spring seems uncertain, while the name hawkweed, bestowed on another yellow flower, has a curious foundation. It was once thought that hawks instinctively used the juice of the plant to improve their sight.

From the dank, green-leaved, white-flowering hemlock the deadliest poison belonging to any plant of the dangerous umbelliferous class is distilled. When the ship hovered on the horizon, and the fated moment had arrived, the great sage Socrates, still speaking wise words to his rapt disciples, calmly drank the juice of the hemlock which was to benumb his limbs and stop his heart.

But the most tragically named of all poisonous plants is the deadly nightshade, with its hanging clusters of purple flowers, its bright red berries, and its close alliance with the friend of man, the potato. Children are sometimes fatally tempted into eating these brilliant berries. Round the grand ruins of Furness Abbey the ground is given up to this enemy of animal life, and is entitled sensationally "The Dell of the Deadly Nightshade." I cannot tell whether the growth is a result of decay, or whether the old monks in their day encountered it, and fought against it as an outward form and sign of the evil which is in the world. The name by which it is commonly known of *bella-donna*, arises from a practice of the Italian *belles*, who use it to add to the beauty of their faces. The extract, when put near the pupil of the eye, causes it to dilate, and imparts a lustre and brightness not otherwise to be attained. I have heard it whispered that the practice is resorted to nearer home,

and that the preparation is sometimes to be seen on the dressing-tables of ladies in this country. It is of great service in dilating the eye in operations for cataract.

Among flowers which are also potherbs "pun-provoking thyme," with its wild sweet fragrance, has something to say of the fairies in its turn, because of that "bank" which Titania was wont to haunt.

Rue, which by the way is not a potherb, is as pun-provoking as thyme, and raises the sweet maiden ghost of Perdita with her "There's rue for you."

A pot of basil figured prominently in the horrible Italian tale which the genius of an English poet and an English painter have helped to make more widely known.

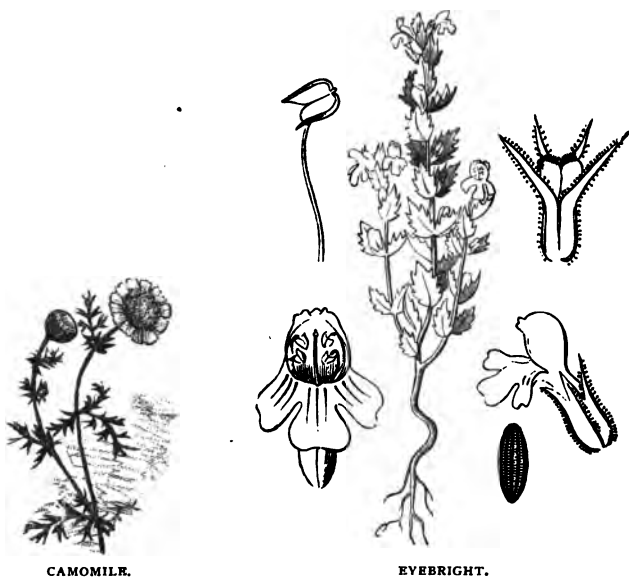
Mint is not so romantic in its associations. It is a plant of direly prosaic, not to say vulgar, suggestions, ranging from roast lamb to the lozenges which cheer the hearts of poor old pauper women.

The separate trade of the herbalist belongs to the past, though many herbs retain their value not only with regard to the "pot," but to the chemist's still. The amber-coloured aconite and the foxglove or digitalis continue in skilful hands to turn their poisons to a beneficent use in deadening pain and restraining over-action of the heart. Poppy heads and camomile flowers lull the sleepless sufferer. Red valerian, beloved of cats, strengthens the nervous system, and so on through the pharmacopœia.

The little purple all-heal or self-heal must once have had a great medicinal reputation. The same turf-carpet which it

variegates is generally gay with eyebright, a particularly cheerful little white, yellow, and lilac blossom.

Eyebright is the euphrasy of Milton and Spenser. It was supposed to cure dimness of sight and loss of memory. It was



used by the archangel Michael to quicken Adam's vision after the Fall.

Ground ivy, with its beautifully shaped and veined leaves, was also used medicinally. It loves another locality, that of the woods or lanes.

A flower which has to do with open heaths is the milkwort, in its purple varieties resembling the heather. Milkwort was

the Rogation flower, and was carried in wreaths and garlands in the processions on Rogation days.

Purple and red heather and ling make up a tribe which turns the brains of mountaineers. There is no use in judging heather by its simple merits, it is dear as the graves of their fathers to many a heart now beating far away from the mother country ; nothing else serves to recall so vividly the misty corries and the cloud-piercing mountains. White heather is held



HEATHER.



COTTON GRASS.

a plant of luck as well as renown, and he is a fortunate man, be he prince or peasant, who finds it at a crisis of his history. With a sprig of white heather in his hand, as we are told in the Queen's words, the Prince Imperial of Germany, whom Germans love to call, after his soldier-uncle, the Red Prince, went to learn his fate from the Crown Princess of England, who has proved the perfect rose of the royal English garden.

In the name, grass of Parnassus, Apollo and the Muses consent to patronize a moorland flower remarkable for the exceeding dead whiteness of its blossom.

The white fluff of the canna or cotton grass is eloquent on a useful industry, and discourses on Manchester operations and Alabama niggers, for the little native plant has never supplied material to speak of, even for Highland wheels. We have to rely on another hemisphere for our enormous requirements in cotton.



ORCHIS.

Orchises are, perhaps, the most strictly beautiful of our moorland and meadow flowers. Their vagaries, though not so marked with us as with other people, are still equal to their beauty. A flower which can simulate a bee with wonderful nicety may lay claim to considerable eccentricity.

Ferns, which have a graceful kingdom of their own—greatly prized in recent times—are apart from the other plants, and find

their nearest allies in rushes and grasses. Like the foxglove, ferns were relegated long ago to the fairies. Foxgloves indeed



MAIDENHAIR-SPLEENWORT FERN.

are folk's gloves—gloves of the folk, the wee folk, the fairies ; and we can hardly ask a blessing on the man or woman who first changed the spelling to the unmeaning foxgloves, and took all the poetry from the name.

Foxgloves are also called "Virgin's fingers" and "gloves of our Lady" in France. In Germany they are styled more prosaically "thimbles." The flower is said to have been used by the Druids in their worship. It is often reckoned of



FOXGLOVES.

bad omen for its poisonous qualities. To gather fern seed, also, was to expose a man to the vengeance of fairy enemies.

Among our wild berries the blackberry or bramble has a place in the first parable of the Old Testament. The purple juice of the fruit stained the innocent lips of the Babes in the

Wood, in whom some deep dippers into old ballads have believed they saw the unfortunate little princes who perished in the Tower, the wicked uncle standing, of course, for Richard III.

Hips and haws form a fine garniture for our hedges. The first belong to the beautiful dog-rose and wild brier, which figure in a peculiar way in old Scotch ballads.

When two young lovers came to a tragic end and were buried in close proximity, out of the grave of each sprang a brier—or it



BRAMBLERERRIES.

might be it was a brier in the one case and a sapling birk in the other—

“ And they twa met,
And they twa plat,”

as a visible sign to the sympathetic world of the undying love and constancy of the pair who had perished early.

Haws are welcome fruit free to unfastidious Scotch town urchins. “A day among the haws” has been celebrated as one of their keenest, most unalloyed pleasures. A weather-erb declares

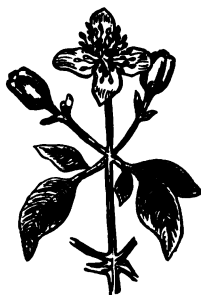
“A hawy year
Is a snawy year.”

The reverent old idea was that there was special provision for the birds made in anticipation of a severe winter.

The chief glory of English hedgerows, after the great white bindweed or convolvulus in summer, is the clematis, known as “traveller’s joy.” It is in perfection in autumn, when its flowers have passed into hoary tufts, the abundance of which



CONVOLVULUS.



WILD CLEMATIS.

makes up for the absence of other blossoms. These tufts are well known to country-people by the name of “old man’s beard.” It is also called virgin’s bower, because it was introduced into England as a bower-making climber in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In the west of England boys were wont to smoke its dry stalks as an introduction to or a substitute for cigars. In France, again, it is called *l’herbe aux gueux*, because beggars make ulcers on their limbs with its juice to excite pity, and afterwards cure them with beetroot. It is called traveller’s joy, as an old writer explains, because of

its "decking and adorning waies and hedges where people travel."

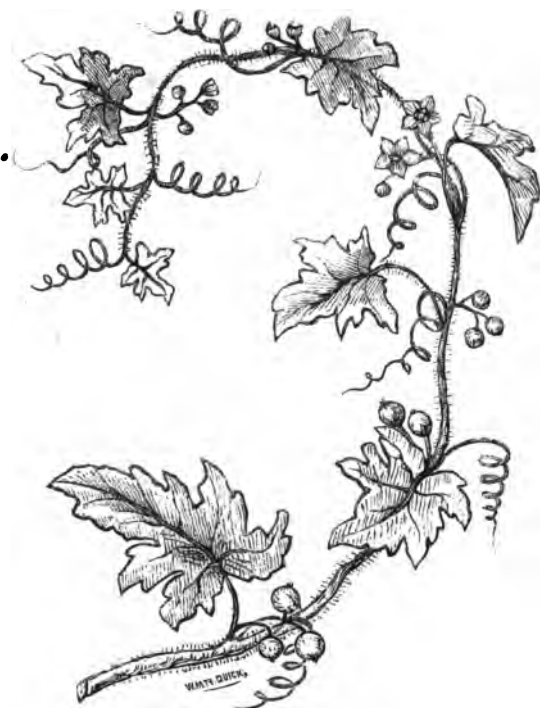
Another magnificent addition to a hedgerow, absolutely



BLACK BRYONY.

unknown in Scotland, and, I fear, rapidly diminishing in England, is bryony. It has finely-shaped leaves of a full green, or in the black bryony as nearly as possible of a

bronzed-purplish black. Its large, glossy, poisonous berries merge as they ripen from a light green to a deep orange, passing into scarlet. The one flaw in the beauty of the plant is the



WHITE BRYONY.

withering and shrivelling of the leaf before the berry changes colour. There is only a naked stem to support the brilliant clusters, which are thus unrelieved and unshaded, like radiant beauty ungraced by modest worth, or a notable success

unsoftened by humility. Bryony, so long as it is permitted to survive, with clematis and wild hops, in anticipation of the ivy and holly of Christmas, must always hold a foremost place in festoons and decorations, whether of English churches celebrating the ingathering of harvest, or of country houses keeping festival over the majority of a son and heir, or the sending forth of a bride.



WATER LILIES.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the Woods.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE WOODS.



THE woods have been compared to a huge living cathedral with green aisles vanishing in the distance.

We have historical, emblematical, and sacred trees as well as flowers. The big, bold, spreading oak, its foliage changing with the season, stands for England; the evergreen fir, with its copper-coloured stem and wellnigh black spines, for Scotland; the tall, lithe poplar for France; and the drooping, silken-leaved lime or linden for Germany. In a less degree the chestnut—whether with the five-fingered leaf of the horse-chestnut, fading from vivid green to golden yellow, or with the laurel-shaped leaf of the sweet chestnut, growing tawny in autumn—and the olive, with its pale silvery blue-green foliage, belong to Italy, the cork-tree to Spain, and the pine to Norway.

Our English oaks extend back to the days of the Druids and farther. Huge dead oaks have been dug out of peat-mosses or found in the beds of rivers. But it is with the living oaks that we have to do. The largest and most renowned naturally stand alone, but there is a famous old wood of oaks

in Scotland, though the tree, as a rule, thrives better in England. This singular wood, hoary with age, survives round the old Castle of Lockwood in Annandale.

Solitary old English oaks have a habit of identifying themselves with William the Conqueror, since Queen Elizabeth, whose memory lingers as another popular landmark, is quite



GROUP OF OAKS.

too modern a person to be connected with a mighty old oak, which, according to a well-known assertion, takes three centuries to arrive at perfection, three centuries to remain in perfection, and a final three to become tottering and decrepit.

There are at least four oaks in England the date of which is calculated by the Norman Conquest, while two of them are held to reach far beyond it. Winfarthing oak is said to have

been already an old tree when Harold fell in the battle of Hastings. The Salcey Forest oak is believed to have been some five hundred years old even in those remote days. Cowper's oak, in Northamptonshire, is not only associated with the gentle poet who wrote when George III. was king, the tradition is that it was planted by the same strong hand which once dealt a buffet to Matilda of Flanders.* In Greenwich Park there is the vast trunk of an oak-tree which has one sickly branch that in the season feebly puts forth a few quickly yellowing leaves. In the middle of the ivy—itsself an old and gnarled tree, which hides the gauntness of the mouldering trunk and holds it together—the remains of a door may be seen that gave entrance to a hollow space, politely termed a room, and certainly furnished with a narrow circular bench capable of accommodating a dozen men. This skeleton remnant of a grand tree is reported to have echoed the first curfew bells.

The Wallace oak at Ellerslie, in Renfrewshire, Scotland, is reported to have hidden among its thick branches not Wallace alone, but three hundred of his followers.

Two other famous old Scotch oaks are near Jedburgh, and are understood to be the last relics of the Forest of Jed. The first is called the king of the woods, as the birch was wont to be styled the queen. The king is forty-three feet high and sixteen feet round. The second oak is the capon-tree—short, but very broad, and, according to tradition, the muster-place of the southern clans.

* Selby's British Forest-Trees.

One of Burns' songs records—

“There grows the aik in Ochertyre,”

and near Ochertyre, standing conveniently by the wayside, is a remarkable oak seen from all the country round, and known as “Eppie Callum’s oak.” The story goes that an old Highland crone sowed the acorn from which the tree sprang in earth contained in a teapot. The teapot is manifestly an error, since Eppie Callum’s oak must have sprouted and shot up a goodly tree long before tea was introduced into Scotland. But teapot may have been substituted in course of time for one of the bean or beau pots in which the old nosegays were stuck.

The royal oak, which once flourished near Boscobel, in Shropshire, is a noted tree in English history. During Charles II.’s wanderings as a fugitive after the battle of Worcester, he stayed several days in the old manor-house of Boscobel. On one of these days when a Roundhead regiment was scouring the neighbouring country, the king, in the company of a Colonel Careless, sat hidden among the thick branches of the oak and watched the baffled soldiers pursuing their search in vain. Bread and cheese and beer had been smuggled up into the tree for the refreshment of Charles and his follower, and the latter held on his knee a pillow against which, as the hours wore on, the proscribed man rested his weary head. Charles, in the days of his prosperity, seems to have cherished a lively recollection of Boscobel and its oak, and showed more gratitude to the men of the place than he was in the habit of displaying to those who had risked their lives and spent their fortunes in his cause.

The royal oak perished through its own popularity, as no defence of paling or wall could long protect the tree from the ardent loyalty of the men who lopped off its giant branches and tore its vast trunk into splinters. The king is said to have planted acorns from the tree in Hyde Park, where the fragments of an oak so grown is, or was till very recently, carefully preserved.

The royal oak, with the king's face beaming out from among the leaves, long flourished as a fitting sign for an inn which aspired to Court favour and the patronage of the nobility and gentry. The custom peculiar to "Oak-Apple Day" required all faithful subjects to decorate their houses with oak branches, or at least to wear a sprig of oak leaves in the bosom or the button-hole, on the 29th of May, the day of the king's restoration, in commemoration of the service rendered to him by an oak.

Oak, in its former abundance in the remains of forest-trees, supplied much of the wood with which churches, houses, and shops were fitted up and ships built, although there has been some exaggeration of the amount to which it was used, in consequence of a long prevalent mistake between two different kinds of timber. Some of the noblest staircases and balustrades in the country are lined and hung with old oak. The rich and delicate English carving in which Grinling Gibbons excelled had oak for its material. Our ships, when they ruled the waves in the years before iron plates and screws had been invented, were proudly called "hearts of oak," and "the wooden walls of Old England."

In the Blue Boar, an old and now demolished inn in the

town of Leicester, there was an oak bedstead on which Richard III. was said to have lain the night before the battle of Bosworth. A hundred years after the battle the bedstead was in the possession of a woman who heard a chinking sound in making the bed one day. On examination the lower part of the bedstead was found to be hollow and full of treasure. That is, three hundred guineas were stored away in the odd receptacle. But the discovery cost the finder her life. She was robbed and murdered. As might have been expected, "King Richard's gold" did not bring good luck.*

There is a veritable King Arthur's round table made of oak, bearing the figure of Arthur and the names of his knights. It was exhibited as Arthur's table by Henry VIII. to the Emperor of Germany, but other and more likely accounts make it a table of King Stephen's. It was in the County Hall, Winchester. It is now hung over the judge's seat in St. Stephen's Hall, in the same town.

Princess Elizabeth was sitting under an oak, which is still standing in the park at Hatfield, and which bears the name of "Queen Elizabeth's oak," when the news was brought to her of the death of her sister Mary, and of her own accession to the throne of England. There is another well-authenticated "Queen Elizabeth's oak." It is a grand oak at Heveningham, Suffolk. In the hollow of its bole Elizabeth, when a princess, is said to have stood in order to shoot the deer as they were driven by. "Queen Elizabeth's Walk" in Windsor Forest consists of old elms, among which are a few oaks. One of

* The Misses Kirby.

these was "Herne's oak." The old keeper, known as "Herne the Hunter," hanged himself from one of its boughs, and his spirit was long held to haunt the spot.

The group known as "Chaucer's oaks" stood in the park near Donnington Castle, where the poet spent his last years. The largest was the king's, the next the queen's, and the third Chaucer's oak.*

An oaken chair preserved in the hall of the President's lodgings, Magdalene College, Oxford, is a relic of the great oak which is believed to have been a sapling when Alfred founded the University, as it was expressly mentioned as "the great oak" near which William of Wainfleet desired his college to be built.

The Codenham oak and the "miracle oak" at Burley, still alive, bud at Christmas. Indeed it was long devoutly believed that the first oak budded regularly on Christmas Eve, old style.

The Wych elm, like the rowan, provided charms against witchcraft. In the huge hollow bole of a mighty elm in the south of England a child was born, and the mother and child inhabited the strange home for some time.

An elm at the entrance of Spring Gardens was planted by the Duke of Gloucester, brother of Charles I., who pointed it out to his guards on the morning of his execution.

Henry II. of England and Philip II. of France met near Gisors under an elm which was said to have covered several acres of land, and sheltered the trains of the two monarchs.

There is a weather prophecy which has to do with the com-

* Gilpin.

parative growth for the year, of oak and ash. It is not too promising either way, while it reads somewhat in this fashion—

“ If the oak comes before the ash,
The rest of the year is mire and splash.”
“ If the ash comes before the oak,
The rest of the year is steam and smoke.”

Many of the old pine forests of Scotland have passed away, though they are in a measure replaced by woods of young pine seedlings. The deep gloom of a pine wood worthy of the name, the carpet of spines, the resinous odour, all separate it from other woods. Whole navies were built out of the old forests. “Straight as a pine” is not only a proverb, it is particularly applicable to the mast of a ship. Milton describes Satan as sustaining his steps in the infernal regions by an uprooted pine, though it was of Norwegian and not of Scotch growth. The tall tree with its dark roof—often sloping to one side—lends itself with wonderful effect to the heaths on which it flourishes, and when it is twisted by wind and blasted by lightning, it only acquires a weird speciality quite in keeping with its original character. Highlanders were accustomed to employ splinters of the root of the pine for torches. Such were waved wildly in the bleak night air during the exciting sport of spearing salmon in the rivers. Sir Walter Scott in the “Legend of Montrose” makes the loss of the family plate amply atoned for when in place of battered silver sconces, fixed at intervals round the walls, a ring of stalwart Highlanders, plaided and plumed, with their naked sword-blades serving as the best reflectors, acted as torch-bearers.

Charles Kingsley was a devoted admirer of the Scotch fir,* and has left a fitting token of his admiration in the paper called "A Winter Garden."

In the Duke of Argyll's grounds at Roseneath are two stately silver firs which I think are called "Adam and Eve." The pair might have seen the landing of Jeannie Deans on her return, under the escort of Mr. Archibald Campbell and Mrs. Dolly Dutton, from her expedition to London to beg the life of her sister from Queen Caroline.

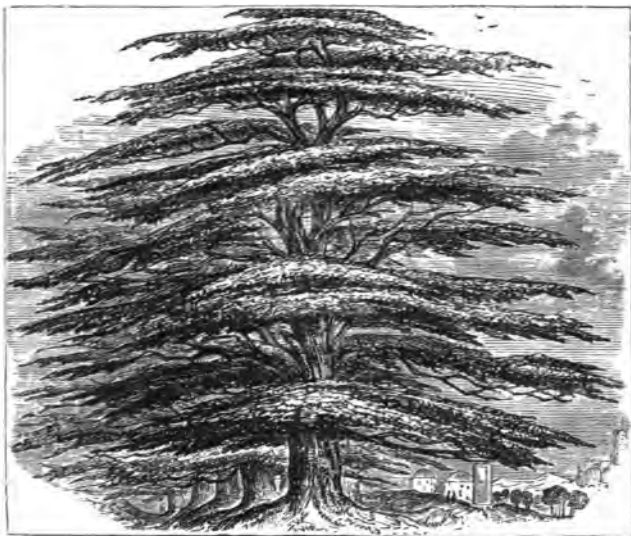
The great tasselled larches in the long-disputed highway of Glen Tilt are among the biggest in Great Britain, while the first larch which appeared in Scotland is reported to have been brought from France in a flower-pot by Queen Mary. I am afraid the date of the introduction of the tree is much later, indeed good authorities bring it as far down as the eighteenth century. But it seems a fact that the original plants were brought from the Continent in the company of specimens of orange-trees, and were kept in hothouses till the sickening of the poor mountain larches induced the gardener to subject them to a hardier treatment. They throve so well under it that the result has been the immense larch plantations of the Highlands in which the Dukes of Athole have taken a lead, proving in this respect national benefactors.

The two largest larch-trees in Britain in Gilpin's time formed the mainmast of the Sovereign in Queen Anne's reign, and the keel of a French ship, *The Crown*, mentioned by John Evelyn. A third was converted in its full dimensions

* The squirrel is partial to the Scotch fir.

into the bowsprit of the Britannia, a ship of a hundred and ten guns.

The venerable slow-growing cedar of Lebanon is one of the pine tribe, though it is not a tree of our woods but of our lawns. It furnished the timber for the temple of King



GROUP OF CEDARS.

Solomon, and "the goodly cedar" is a prominent tree in the Book of Psalms. In our country and time a fine cedar is the noblest, most cherished feature of many an English lawn and old churchyard. The possession of a cedar which has grown up in the family is a fair patent of antiquity, and, by inference, of gentility. There is a tradition that Queen Elizabeth planted the cedar at Enfield, but there is a still greater

presumption that it and its contemporaries came from the garden of the enthusiastic landscape-gardener John Evelyn. Another supposition links it with Stephen Fox, the founder of the Holland family, the same Stephen whose love-match with Lady Caroline Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond, figures pleasantly in Horace Walpole's letters.*

The poplar, whether black or white, or a tall Lombardy poplar, is distinguished by the perpetual rustling among its twigs and leaves, which comes to a climax in the species called the aspen. Mediæval religion laid hold of the attribute and founded a striking legend on it. The tale runs that the wood of the cross of Calvary was of the aspen, and that at the moment when it received its Divine burden a shuddering shiver ran through the senseless wood. This shiver communicated itself to all the other aspen-trees, and has never ceased to stir them in a mute protest against the awful crime in which they were compelled to bear a part.

The Lombardy poplar, like the yew, has a funereal character, and is a frequenter of churchyards. It rises up before us, its green spire dominating over the crumbling fortified walls of old Italian towns, while its French and Belgian kindred stand in bushier stiffness, in long parallel lines, marking the canals and cross roads through flat beetroot and flax fields, or forming formal groves about white châteaux. The Lombardy poplar has a peculiar single sweep, when yielding to the wind, which Gilpin in his "Forest Scenery," as quoted by Selby, compared quaintly to the swaying of an ostrich feather on a lady's head.

* Selby's *British Forest-Trees*.

Leigh Hunt apparently borrowed the image when he wrote—

“The poplar’s shoot,
Which like a feather waves from head to foot.”

The catkin of the poplar, willow, etc., is named from its resemblance to the tail of a cat.

From the willows of the Lahn were made most of the brooms which sandy-haired German broom-girls, conspicuous in their high printed calico caps, laced bodices, and short full skirts, wandered from end to end of Great Britain fifty years ago, selling while they sung—

“Buy a broom, buy a broom,”

or in their native Doric—

“Mein lieber Augustine.”

But the willow is associated with a more tragic song and a more hapless singer. Desdemona’s mother had a maid called Barbara, crossed in love, who would go hanging her head on one side and singing, “Willow, willow.” Her gentle young mistress followed her example when the noble Othello grew mad with jealousy, and his crime and his true love’s death drew near, while the shadow of their terrible fate fell beforehand on the innocent sufferer.

It is doubtful whether the phrase “wearing the willow” was coined in honour of Desdemona and her mother’s maid Barbara, or whether it existed before Shakespeare’s time, and was at the bottom of the doleful song. Be that as it may, it has floated on the composite, changing surface of our

English speech down to to-day, and is still applied to a jilted swain or damsel.

The willow is a favourite tree with the gipsies of Hungary and Bohemia, who pitch their tents beneath its boughs.

The first weeping-willow is said to have been brought to England through the instrumentality of a pair of philandering friends who were not platonic in their subsequent bitter feud. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, when in Turkey, sent Pope a willow basket containing figs. Observing a green germ on one of the interlaced boughs, he cut a slip from it and planted it in his garden at Twickenham, where it grew and gladdened the little man by taking the novel form of a weeping-willow. One wonders whether, after his fierce quarrel with Lady Mary, the poet ever softened far enough to regard the tree as in the attitude of mourning for wasted pledges, withered hopes, and esteem and affection worse than dead and gone.

The famous weeping-willow which hung over the grave of the great Napoleon in St. Helena sent sufficient shoots to Europe to have raised a forest of such trees. One shoot found a place in the grounds of Walmer Castle in the days of the great Duke.

The story of the living shoot reclaimed from the basket is comically parodied by an Irish tale of a kitchen dresser composed of a huge rough slab of elm or plane, such as one sees occasionally employed for a butcher's block. This table had been in active use for two years when the cook detected a swelling bourgeon in the bark. The table was sacrificed and the slice of the tree replanted in its native earth, where it took

root downwards, and sprang again upwards until it became once more, at the time the story was told, a flourishing tree of the wood.

The lime is beloved of bees, which hum in its branches when the tree is in flower. It has a sneaking kindness for stone and lime. No other tree flourishes so well in streets and on boulevards. The Linden Strasse of Berlin is a triumphant proof of what may be done in a town avenue. Germans view the beautiful branching tree in a more poetic light, and celebrate it in their songs, claiming the heart shape of its leaves as a token for true lovers.

The famous lime of Cleves was trimmed by the burgomasters into eight broad pyramidal faces. Each corner was supported by a handsome stone pillar, and in the middle of the tree was cut a noble room without impairing the eight faces. The top was clipped into some kind of head of lion, or stag, or weathercock, and adorned artificially "in the highest style of Dutch taste."

‡ There is a row of venerable limes at Augsburg under which emperors and burghers once feasted together.

Swiss and Walloon both planted the lime-tree as a sign of liberty much as the French planted the poplar-tree. The lime of Zurich formed a bower capable of holding five hundred persons. The tree is called "the carver's tree" because it does not turn the workman's tools, and was much in use in old English wood-carving.

‡ The horse-chestnut, which has the most stately flower of all our trees, brought the first part of its name from Turkey, where

the nuts are or were bruised and offered as medicinal food to horses. Children will give you another definition of the name. They point to an impression, as of a tiny horse-shoe, which may be discovered dented on the bough just above each bud. The whole flower has been compared to a large hyacinth, while the entire tree in flower has been likened prosaically, but graphically, to a gigantic candelabra stuck thick with candles. The pyramids of flowers are a rare sight for English eyes, not accustomed to splendid tree-blossoms. Every summer when the horse-chestnut avenue at Bushy is in full bloom, crowds of Londoners pour out to gaze on the magnificent spectacle.

The sweet chestnut, with a comparatively insignificant flower of a greenish-yellow colour, yet acquires such an incomparably soft golden-olive tint when it is covered with blossom as to have a charm of its own. The beating of the chestnut-trees in order to knock down the nuts resembles the same process in the fragrant-leaved walnut-tree which has given rise to the famous distich—

“ A wife and a dog and a walnut-tree,
The more you beat them the better they be.”

Great old sweet chestnut-trees dispute the pre-eminence with old thorn-trees in Greenwich Park, the soil of which is said to be peculiarly suited to the tree. Some are said to have been planted by the indefatigable John Evelyn, but for the most part their arrangement in long straight lines and parallelograms, which are as dignified as they are formal, is due to the French landscape-gardener L'enôte, who lived also in Charles II.'s reign.

These chestnut-trees witnessed the extinct humours of Greenwich Fair as well as the lying-in-state of Nelson, brought back to rest on English ground from the dearly-bought victory of Trafalgar. Still on an Easter or Whit-Monday city holiday-makers—become more decorous than of old—dance “Sir Roger de Coverley” in their shade.

An old Spanish chestnut, the oldest sweet chestnut in England, which is believed to have been a boundary tree in the reign of King John, is still living at Tortworth, a seat of Lord Ducie’s.

A huge chestnut-tree on the side of Etna is called “the chestnut-tree of a hundred horses” from a tradition that mad Jane of Aragon, with a long train of nobles, took refuge from a storm under its branches.

The sycamore, plane, and maple are bushy-headed relatives more or less near. The strong, broad, dark leaves of the sycamore are often covered with the big black spots of a fungus, which was once believed to be the effect of the sun’s rays concentrated in drops of dew as in “burning glasses.” Into a sycamore, according to our English translation of the Bible, Zaccheus, the Jewish publican of small stature, climbed to see the Deliverer of his nation and the world, and received the blessing freely bestowed on all eager, earnest hearts.

There is a quaint couplet which links the growths of the plane and bear, a coarser kind of barley—

“ When the plane leaves cover the pyet’s nest,
Bear seed is at its best.”

Plane-trees have a classical flavour, since Agamemnon is

said to have planted one and Menelaus another.* Nay, the bridal wreath of the fair and false Helen of Troy is said to have been composed of the catkins of the plane-tree. The academic groves of Athens were composed of plane-trees. Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates taught under their shade. The Romans copied the Greeks in their cultivation of the plane, and Cicero watered his tree with wine. "Caligula's nest" was "a hollow cave" in the trunk of a plane-tree capable of holding fifteen persons to dinner. Such strange resorts were in favour in his day.

The beech is, like the oak, a king of trees, and not only possesses many claims to man's regard, it shows numerous proofs of his partiality. It was a favourite of Virgil's on the plains of Lombardy. It has been held in high esteem in English landscape by every native poet and lover of nature. Its admirers cannot say enough in praise of its size; its fine glossy leaves, in every shade of green, according to the period of the year, till with October they borrow the richest, reddest squirrel tint, which warms for a brief space our English woods; its smooth silver-grey stem; the purple tinge on its boughs. The wood of the beech was formerly in extensive use for every kind of domestic furniture, and beechen or treen bowls flourished on every table till superseded by pewter and pottery. Billets of beech-wood are still the most approved fagots for French fires. In the remoter rural districts of Switzerland and Italy mattresses continue to be stuffed with beech leaves as when John Evelyn lay on them to his great

* The Misses Kirby.

refreshment. We have it on the later authority of Sir T. Dick Lauder that these mattresses had in his experience a fragrant smell of green tea "which was most gratifying."*

The beech-tree is thus perhaps next to the palm for the many ways in which it is useful to man. Chairs, tables, and bedsteads are made from its wood, as well as tool-handles, maltsters' and hop-farmers' shovels, bushel measures, sieves, packing cases, keels, piles, floodgates, barrels, and on the Continent *sabots*. Fish are cured with its smoke, mattresses used to be largely stuffed with its dried leaves, and oil is pressed out of its mast, which, with acorns, was in old days the food for pigs. In the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" of 1116 it is written, "Mast also was so scarce this year that none was to be heard of in all this land, or in Wales."

One of the oddest unexplained freaks of nature was the appearance in a German forest of that single purple beech from which all the "black," "purple," or "copper" beeches of modern lawns and parks have a common descent.

The ash-tree has a certain homeliness in its handsome proportions. It is not only said to look its best in those narrow dells or dens where it hangs over the flashing, sparkling waters of becks or burns, it does not disdain stackyards, which it adorns, while ambitious peacocks and turkeys roost in its branches. It has the great disadvantage of being one of the latest trees in leaf though not one of the earliest to shed its leaves. Tennyson writes of its buds as black in March. In addition, it does not fade becomingly. Its leaves pass from a dull

* Selby's British Forest-Trees.

apple-green to a sickly straw colour, when they shrivel in brown and grey.

Down in Devonshire there are districts where the Yule log



GROUP OF ASH-TREES.

is a slice of the trunk of an ash-tree, and for every ring in the bark the guests can claim a measure of cider.

Old superstition hallowed the common ash, and still more its picturesque and beautiful sister the mountain ash, which is known in Scotland as the rowan or witchen tree, and in England as a variety of the service-tree. The mountain ash

has a doubly-serrated darker leaf, which contrasts admirably with its white flower and orange-red berries. It is the glory of the Highlands, where it adds the brilliant tint of its fruit—much appreciated by thrushes—to the purple of the heather, the russet of the bracken, the mossy brown of the rivers, and the grey of the rocks. A morsel of the tree was wont to rival a rusty horse-shoe as a charm against witchcraft. A slip of rowan sewed into the coat and gown made man and woman magic-proof.

The clusters of the ash flowers are called “keys.” The tree is entitled “the husbandman’s tree.” Sick children used to be thrust naked through clefts in the ash. A shrew-mouse was shut up a prisoner in a hole pierced in the shrew ash in order to get rid of the vermin generally.

The rowan-tree, or mountain ash, is celebrated in Lady Nairne’s sweet and plaintive Scotch song.

The elm divides itself loosely but naturally into two kinds—the English elm, with its rich foliage; and the Scotch or Wych elm, with its graceful boughs bending right and left. The English elm has a right scholarly flavour because of the grand avenues in Christchurch Meadows, Oxford, and at St. John’s, Cambridge.

There are other elms which, with the lime-tree, love still better the busy haunts of men. Some of these elms have grown to huge bulk on the quay street of Rotterdam. This Dutch elm was brought to England by Dutch William, and there are fine remains of it in Kensington Gardens. Another social elm is the American tree, which lends a distinctive

beauty to many an old Puritan town and village in the United States. The noble American elm, with its ample shade, has echoed the sober yet hearty services of hundreds of Thanksgiving Days for the national independence which was secured by the victory at Bunker's Hill.

At Badesley, near Lymington, grew the elm which was known as "the groaning tree." It emitted sounds resembling groans frequently, though not constantly, in clear frosty weather for the most part. People differed as to the origin of the groans, whether they were due to friction in the twisted roots of the tree, whether to water lodged in it, whether to a vegetable conscience sorely oppressed. A gentleman named Forbes, only too anxious to arrive at a solution of the mystery, bored a hole in the trunk, when the groans ceased. As the tree had lost its attraction, it was torn up partly for further examination, partly in disgust, no doubt, but no explanation of the phenomenon was arrived at.

As for the Wych elm, it is rustic and not urban, and prefers Teeside dales and Tweedside haughs, where a patriarch of its race survives in a renowned old trysting-tree.

The birch or birk tree, most graceful of native trees, with its small fine leaves and light waving tracery, is the queen to his majesty the oak. "The lady of the woods" is a second title, while the foliage of the birch, like the leaves of one species of fern, has been compared to a maiden's hair. The tree is fragrant after rain, and it produced a wine in the days of home-brewed wines. The birk forms the burden or enters into the imagery of more than one lovely Scotch song. At

the same time it is supposed to have supplied the rods with which notable matrons in the first place, and irate school-masters in the second, "birched" naughty urchins.

Among the humbler coppice, hazel-bushes form the goal of many a merry nutting expedition. Everybody knows the peculiar luck which attends the finding of a twin nut or "Phillipine." *

The elder or bourtree bush lent both its flowers and berries to the brewing of two different kinds of native wines. "Mistress Jean" was making the first when disturbed in her culinary operations by the redoubtable "Laird of Cockpen."

Under a mulberry-tree, still growing on its ancient site, bluff King Hal is said to have met and talked with ill-fated Anne Boleyn.

* The famous Glastonbury thorns are said to have sprung from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he came over to Christianize England.

CHAPTER IX.

Among Birds.



CHAPTER IX.

AMONG BIRDS.

MEN have loved the company of birds and associated them with human history before the days of Aristophanes, indeed ever since the details of their flight were accepted as omens in the appeals to the old oracles.

The cackling of geese aroused the sleepers in time to save the Capitol of Rome.

The wild swan died uttering the sweetest song bird ever sang.

The raven was the bird which was to herald the awaking of Frederick Barbarossa from his long sleep.

The eagle was not only the king of birds, the bird of Jove, he has come down to us on French, Russian, Prussian, and Austrian standards as the ensign of war.

The trained falcon was man's friend and companion in the old game of hawking, and he is the true hero of a famous old tale.

Peacocks drew Juno's car as doves drew that of Venus. But the comely grey-and-lilac dove is not only the emblem of beauty and softness, it has a far higher signification as the bird of guilelessness and purity. It was one of the humbler offerings or ransoms for a first-born child ordained by the Jewish Church, and as such, a pair of young pigeons was presented to the priest by Joseph and Mary. As the symbol of the Holy Ghost the dove is venerated by the Greek Church.

The coo of the cushat-dove makes evening melodious. But



THE EAGLE.

there is an undercurrent of sadness in the brooding, yearning call which is held, in certain circumstances, as a sign of sorrow. In the old ballads a white dove is frequently used as an emblem of the cleansed and innocent soul rather than as part of the doctrine of metempsychosis. Unhappy lovers persecuted to death appeared again for a brief space as two fitly-mated doves.

An old Scotch nursery story, which may have been the last version of a ballad or play, winds up the piteous tragedy of a girl slain by a wicked stepmother with the fact of her miserable father

“ Hiding her banes
Aneath white chuckie stanes,
Which grew and grew
To a white cushie-doo,
Then took to flight and flew awa.”

I fear it may detract from the romantic character of the wild



RINGDOVES.

dove to mention its enormous appetite for every kind of grain. It is one of the pests of the farmer.

The common domestic pigeon, however pretty and harmless as he struts and plumes himself, may strike the reader as not a likely subject for tragic associations. Yet there are supersti-

tions connected with him too. To disturb his peace by pulling down the old pigeon-house or "doocot"—often coeval with the family mansion, to which it forms a useful appendage—was held in Scotland to signify the death of the wife of the reckless laird who ventured on the wanton deed. To indulge in pigeons too continuously as an article of diet was believed to induce madness in the eater.

The wonderful capacities of pigeons as "carriers" are too well known to need enumeration. Carrier-pigeons have made a popular figure in the minor fields of art. The picture of the faithful dove winging its way, constant though weary, to the window which is his goal, with the fair face watching and the eager hand reached out to welcome the longed-for visitor, is very winning in its way, and has been painted in black and white and in gayer colours innumerable times. After all, the first carrier-pigeon went on Noah's errand, the letter was an olive branch—would that all letters conveyed in like manner brought as sure a promise of peace!—and the ark was the bird's starting-point and destination. Moreover, his fidelity was not cloudless, he did not always return to the hand which had cherished him during the flood. When the waters were dried up from the face of the earth, so that the bird could find food and shelter for himself, animal-like, as a rule, he preferred freedom to friendship.

Pigeons are social little creatures, and haunt in flocks the town markets and roofs, where the birds can easily pick up a meal. Thus they are a prominent and pleasant feature amidst the ruins of the past in Rome.

The owl was Minerva's bird because of the exaggeration of wisdom in its preternaturally solemn aspect and hideous hootings. To Rome also belongs specially a species of small owl.

The heron, with its long legs and bill, has ceased to be the appointed quarry of the falcon and the apology for a knightly



THE HORNED OWL.

and picturesque sport. The sentiment which attaches to the heron in the present day is the love of loneliness, which it shares with many game-birds.

The hooded crow or howdie crow, like the raven or corbie, has always been regarded as a gruesome bird, not only feeding on carrion and scenting its prey from afar, but in the case of the corbie indulging in the grimmest and eeriest humour, well

exemplified in the terrible old Scotch ballad when the corbies converse confidentially over the slain knight.

In private life, when tamed and taught to speak our language



THE HERON.

in bird fashion, the corbie becomes much more agreeable, though even then he is a little uncanny. Most of us must recollect the raven Grip with his "Polly, put the kettle on," and his "Never say die," in "Barnaby Rudge."

The rook has uniformly been a solemn and decorous bird,

so much so that when birds are made to personify gentlemen in office, the rook plays the parson, frequently the bishop. Who has not seen or heard something of the curious assemblages of these birds known as "Rooks' Parliaments"? Great flocks will alight in a field, and the birds will caw to each other by the hour. But first, in order to preserve the privacy of the meeting, and to prevent it from being prematurely broken



ROOKS.

up, the rooks send scouts in advance to report on the state of the neighbourhood, and keep sentries stationed at intervals round their St. Stephen's in order to give the members timely warning of the approach of foreign intrusion. The appearance of the same birds in a compact or looser body ranging through the sky is a proof of bird combination, organization, and concord.

Rooks are strongly attached to localities, and will linger in the remnant of the trees which once constituted a rookery long after the whole surroundings have been changed and the

scene covered with stones and lime, while the birds will not be coaxed to come and take up their abode in what are to them new trees.

The centres of great cities have thus frequently rejoiced in rookeries, which formed a source of great interest to the observer, and often of amusement to the children. In Hereford Square, Old Brompton, London, there were nests up till within a few years ago, when the noise of workmen on new buildings near, frightened them away. There are, or were quite recently, a few nests in some trees at the back of houses in Wimpole Street, and others in plane-trees at Brunswick House Gardens, New Road ; while in Kensington Gardens we learned not long ago that the nests had increased from thirty-one to fifty—an increase which, we hope, has continued ; and the same has to be said of the garden in Gower Street, which had five nests.

We must give one of the many attractive stories of rooks which we have before us, assured that it will please our readers ; it is illustrative of the manner in which rooks will follow their young, and was told by an eminent London surgeon :—

“When he was house-surgeon to St. George’s Hospital he was in the daily habit of taking an early walk through Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. One morning whilst walking in Kensington Gardens he noticed a number of rooks congregated on the ground making a great cawing and noise. On going up to see what was the matter, he noticed two unfledged young ones on the ground, which had evidently fallen from the nest above. He took them up, put one in

each pocket, continued his walk home by the Serpentine, and deposited them in the garden of the hospital, in which at that time was a large plane-tree. He was engaged in making a little nest on the ground, in which he intended to feed them, when he heard a great bustle in the tree above, and on looking up, to his astonishment he found the plane-tree covered with rooks. They set up a great clamour, and on his going away a distance they all came down to look at the young birds, and then all but two went away. These two birds constantly came and fed the young rooks, and their captor had no further trouble. He only removed them every night for fear of cats, and on bringing them out in the morning there were the old birds ready to feed them. The young birds grew up, and to prevent their flying away he had their wings cut. They remained in the garden for two years and then were allowed to fly. They continued to frequent the garden for some time after they regained their liberty."

The rook is a weather prophet. On the most cloudless days, when the bird, in the course of his flight, suddenly darts downwards until he is hovering over the ground, the traveller may look out for rain within the next twenty-four hours.

The starling, with his brown coat and speckled waistcoat, is more homely and less alarming than the funereal raven, when the first bird in his turn talks our gibberish as well as chatters his own. Witness Sterne's starling with his complaint—simple and natural, if a trifle monotonous—"I can't get out," and Macleod's starling with his loyal declaration, "I'm Charlie's bairn," which, however, brought his master, the worthy sergeant,

into sore trouble. For the starling has an unearthly side, and a tap on the window-pane by a wild starling's beak is reckoned in some country places a summons to another world.

Nor should the starling in Mr. Robert Buchanan's striking poem be forgotten, with its weird swearing in answer to the bad words of the little lame tailor, its master ; and the grim pity of the closing stanza :—

“ When an old Jew
Claimed the goods of the Tailor,
And with eye askew
Eyed the feathery railer,
And with a frown
At the dirt and rust,
Took the old cage down
In a shower of dust, —
Jack, with heart aching,
Felt life past bearing,
And shivering, quaking,
All hope forsaking,
Died, swearing.”

The starling is not only accredited with some capacities for theft, but specific charges have been made against him. Naturalists have given us some good reasons for believing that wherever starlings abound they plunder the nests of the skylarks of eggs, a circumstance to which it is said that the decrease of the skylark in various districts is to be attributed ; and as each of us is interested in hearing, when we take a country walk, the sweet song of the skylark, we are thus indirectly concerned with the conduct of the starling.

The magpie or pyat, with her pied black-and-white plumage, gives rise to an odd jumble of ideas, and a rhyme which

presages joy or sorrow, according to the number of birds which flit by in rapid succession :—

“ One’s joy,
Two’s grief,
Three’s a marriage,
Four’s a death.”

The magpie and the jackdaw have both Christian names, but I am unable to tell what gossiping or dishonest Margaret, dishonouring her pearl of names, or what mischievous Jack, supplied the familiar abbreviation. The birds have more things in common than their Christian names. They are both of them capable of copying human speech, like their rivals the raven and starling, and they each develop a fine faculty for theft. They covet and filch, hide and hoard, on the most approved principle of human roguery and hypocrisy. The jackdaw on his own account is a greater frequenter of chimneys than the chimney-sweep himself.

I am equally at a loss for what small coquettish Janet lent her Jenny to the wren.

The jay has long been a byword for a false pretender, a creature flaunting in the attributes of another, as the bird was supposed to deck itself in borrowed plumage.

The hawk is a bird that may well be regarded with some aversion, but it is capable not only of being tamed but of becoming an attached pet. The brother of the writer, when a lad, procured a young hawk from a nest in beetling “craigs” by the sea-shore. The small hawk was named “Keerie,” and was reared with great care on jackdaw’s fare of worms and

morsels of raw meat. It grew up wonderfully tame and attached to its boy owner, who allowed it more privileges than the family dreamt of. Some girl cousins paying the house a visit chanced to occupy the lad's room during his temporary absence. One of the girls was awakened in the night by a succession of smart little taps on the window-pane. She had wit enough to recognise that these came from the beak of a bird, and leaping to the conclusion that the challenger was some pet pigeon of the boy's, she opened the window, when, sure enough, a bird flew into the room in the dim darkness of a summer night and took up its post on the roof of the bed. She received a considerable shock in the morning when she found herself sharply watched, not by the shy, gentle eye of a dove, but by the keen, half-fierce eye of a bird of prey.

Arrived at maturity, the hawk took upon itself the filling of its larder, and kept down the depredations of sparrows on the rows of peas in the kitchen-garden. But not being blessed with human discrimination, Keerie, egged on by a thoughtless pair of lookers-on, engaged in a cruelly destructive warfare with a brood of young turkeys, the pride of the poultry-yard. For this enormity the hawk was sentenced to perpetual banishment, greatly to the chagrin of its master. To render the sentence as effectual and at the same time as merciful as possible, Keerie was consigned to a basket from which light was excluded, was carried a long way off, as it seemed to its afflicted bearers, and at last was set down in the centre of a corn-field. The bird, either from dignified submission, or from unqualified wonder at this new state of matters, did not attempt

to follow its friends home, and was not heard of for the rest of the day and evening. The night closed in rainy and stormy. About midnight the servants who slept on the ground-floor were aroused by a peculiar noise at the front door. On opening it cautiously, Keerie, draggled but cheerful, hopped across the threshold. It is unnecessary to say that it experienced not only a reprieve of its sentence, but a free pardon for its offence.

In some of Keerie's hostile encounters the bird broke one of its legs, but this was so deftly set by its master that the mauled fighter recovered rapidly, and soon showed no sign of the injury.

Keerie's fate would have better become a raven than a hawk. It disappeared. It was credulously supposed to have fallen a victim to some sportsman who did not know that the bird was a tame pet. But for anything the writer can tell to the contrary, Keerie may have been a bird of augury, and having fulfilled his mission in that corner of the world, perhaps it was but meet that he should vanish—fly away to arrive as a herald of destiny in another region.

The cuckoo calling its name is "the voice of spring." In Scotland the bird has been named the gowk or fool, probably because first heard about the beginning of April (old style). Poor young Michael Bruce's "Ode to the Cuckoo," or "Song on the Gowk," as the old ploughman his father described it, has linked his name inseparably with that of the bird.

The landrail or corncrake, in his harsh cry over the green corn, strikes a rattle like an alarmed policeman.

The pheasant, among the game-birds which make sport for civilized man, has come all the way from Asia. The Greeks imagined that the child prince murdered in the sad story of the sisters Philomela and Procene was changed into a pheasant.



THE CUCKOO.

The noble capercaillie or cock of the woods is more deserving of the title "Cock of the North" than any gay Gordon who ever claimed the distinction.

The moorland river and sea birds, in their irreclaimable

wildness and solitary haunts, have an element of savage dreariness in their beauty.

The lapwing or teuchit with its wailing cry is understood by Scotch children to utter the lamentation—

“Peasewep, peasewep,
Harried my nest and garred me greet.”*

The beautiful kingfisher is not the more social for his beauty, while he is proclaimed with reason the king of the stalking and



THE KINGFISHER.

fishing tribe. He has been represented as sitting silently on his perch—the bough of a tree overhanging a brook—

while
“Like a figure in a dream,”

“Brilliant hues of sun and rain
Make a sunlight on the stream.

* The lapwing is notorious for the cunning stratagem—surely derived from man—by which the bird seeks to decoy away any alarming stranger from the neighbourhood of its nest. It will feign a broken wing or lameness, and go fluttering and falling, almost among the feet of the new-comer, till, taken in by the trick, and tempted to try to catch the bird, he is drawn off from the spot.

Where the shade is full and thick,
 And seldom seen by eye of man,
 'Tis there he still pursues his task,
 In answer to his nature's plan.

King of fishers, truly, thou,
 As patient as was Isaac old ; *
 But have you ever in your heart
 A tender pity all untold ? ”

The poetical fancy embodied in the idea of the kingfisher's making “a sunlight” or a rainbow on the stream, in a leaf-shaded place, has not perhaps an entirely poetical origin, and may have its prosaic and practical side, which, however, does not quite undo the poetical one. We read in a good authority :—

“The kingfisher has frequently been observed hovering on outstretched wings over the water, and some writers believe that this is done with a view of attracting the fish to the surface. Whether this is the case is not yet ascertained, but it is well known that when a light is thrown at night on the water the inhabitants of the ‘finny deep’ flock in numbers to discover the cause of the unwonted brilliancy.”

And we have ourselves often sat in a shady spot by the border of a brook thickly overhung with foliage, and noticed that where a small ray of sunlight penetrated and struck the water, there the small fish rose to bask in it. The kingfisher makes an artificial sunlight which helps him.

* Isaac Walton, who wrote a celebrated book on fishing called “The Complete Angler,” and was himself a devoted lover of the sport. He was a shopkeeper in London, but was well received in the literary society of his time. He wrote the life of the great Church of England theologian Hooker, and several other works. He was born in London in 1593, and died in 1683.

Though naturally of a timid disposition, the kingfisher may be easily tamed, as is shown in the following anecdote. A young man fishing one day for trout caught a small minnow, which he took off the hook, intending to return it to its native element, but, missing the mark, it fell on the bank, and was instantly pounced upon and borne off by a kingfisher. Shortly after the angler again hooked a minnow, and this time he threw it on the bank, and the watchful bird again bore down upon it. It then occurred to the fisher to give a peculiar whistle whenever he threw a fish to the bird. Before many days were over he had completely tamed it, and for the space of three years it always accompanied him on his fishing excursions, coming directly it heard the well-known whistle. After that period it was seen no more, having probably met its death by the hand of the fowler.

The kingfisher is said to be strangely affected by music. On playing an organ in a room facing a river it was found that several of these birds were attracted by the sounds, seeming to enjoy especially slow and solemn airs, such as chants ; indeed, this was observed to be the only kind of music they appreciated, for whenever brisk, lively tunes were played they appeared to be put out, and generally flew away. Both these anecdotes are drawn from Wood's "Natural History," in which there is an excellent account of the habits of this bird.

In spite of their very shy habits, kingfishers are sometimes to be found in very unexpected places. Till recently they were to be seen frequently in Camberwell, and specimens were shot there not so many years ago ; but it goes without saying that now-

adays they are disappearing from that increasingly populous locality. We read, for example, in the "Occasional Notes" of the *Zoologist* :—

"‘On the 1st of March last’ [1878], writes Mr. R. Walters of Ewell, ‘I saw a kingfisher fly across the Royal Toxophilite Grounds, Regent Park, apparently on its way from the Ornamental Water to the Botanical Gardens.’”

Even in country places where it used to be familiar the kingfisher has been exterminated, and in others it is now so rare that it is an event for naturalists to see one.

The blue sea-mew flying landward before storms is a harbinger of bad weather, and has occasioned the entreaty—

“Sea-maw, sea-maw, sink into the sand,
There will never be gude weather while you come to land.”

Mother Carey’s chickens announce, too, a storm, but who or what Mother Carey herself was, I doubt whether anybody can now clearly define.

The snowy albatross is doubly sacred because he was held so from the beginning, and for the sake of Coleridge’s “Ancient Mariner,” who shot the confiding bird that would alight on the ship’s mast, and dreed his awful weird in consequence of his pitiless heart and hand.

The nightingale, chief of song-birds, was supposed to be that Philomela whom her sister Procene—changed in her turn into a swallow—loved so well that the fond longing in absence for the old companionship paved the way in the mysterious counsels of the gods for unspeakable misery, crime, and anguish. It was a sister’s and not a husband’s or wife’s sorrow which the

bird was believed to pour forth in liquid notes of tender passion and despair. The swallow, with its sharp piercing cry, was regarded as poor Procene—whose love wrought unwittingly such wrong and ruin to the creature beloved—replying piteously to her sister. Both nightingale and swallow are birds of passage in England, and each tells in different keys of pensiveness and yearning the welcome news that summer is at the door. The early flight of the swallow is said to be the sign of an early winter.



THE NIGHTINGALE.

One of Béranger's most pathetic songs contains the message sent by a swallow from the French soldier in exile at Algiers to his mother and sister, and the girl he was to call his wife, in the distant home valley.

An older and more widely known reference to the swallow enters with a very touching effect into the great tragedy of Macbeth. Swallows are said to haunt the murderer's castle, and to prove that the air is "sweet and delicate," good for the health of the gentle old king.

In spite of the sorrowful light in which the swallow has been made to figure, it was thought the bird brought luck to the house when she built beneath the eaves.

The water-wagtail, unlike the family to which he is nearly allied, is not only named for his brusque, defiant airs, the sole story attached to him is a genteel comedy in two lines—

“ I courted a lady, I did not prevail,
And that is the reason I wag my tail.”

The blackbird or merle, and the thrush or mavis, are rich,



THE BLACKBIRD.

sweet singers that cause, not the remoter woodlands and hedges alone, but every shrubbery and group of orchard-trees to ring with their full-throated refrain. Like the robins, they hop about our familiar paths and doorsteps, and are mixed up with the events of all the summers of our lives, while in the winters the musicians come to us, frank, trustful pensioners, to receive the lion's share of our doles, for these are big birds with roomy crops. Blackbirds are apt to fly in threes, giving the lie to the gruff proverb, “Two are company, three are none.”

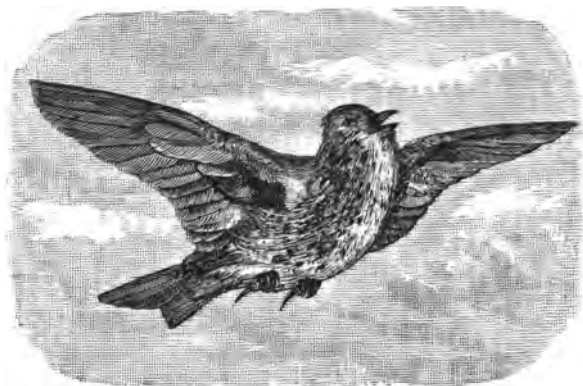
The little brown lark or laverock has been fairly pelted with glorious lays, from Shelley's ode to Hogg's lyric. No wonder, since it is "the bird which sings at heaven's gate;" the singer whose song is in heaven while her home is on earth; the bird that

" Rises in the morning
With the dew upon her breast;

The laverock in the blue lift,"

that

" Draps down and thinks na shame;"



THE LARK.

the tiny creature which is at once so soaring as it pipes its clear joyous measure, and so humble as it nestles among the grass. It is to Sir Francis Head, I believe, that we owe our first version of the pretty little story which we can all understand of the emigrant's skylark. How the proud owner hung the bird out in its wicker cage, with the inch or two of turf

which had become difficult to get under the cloudless Australian sky, and how brother-emigrants trudged many a weary mile just to listen to the old familiar notes which brought back touching scenes of the youth that was long past, and the home that would never be revisited.

The linnet or lintie is a modest little brown and grey or greenish bird with a small trill at once blythe and tender. It is the fit representative of unobtrusively good and kind people. The heather linnet has a moorland shyness and *naïveté* added to its other attractions.

The chaffinch or shilfa is called in some English counties the pink, from its cry. Besides its chatter, which is certainly a human enough attribute, it has an honourable reputation for constancy which associates it with the best men and women. It is said to be the only small bird which is faithful for life, and not merely for a season, to its mate. Another peculiarity ascribed to the chaffinch is that every spring it has to learn its song afresh. It is perhaps in protest against this trouble that the bird has taken to chattering. A chaffinch threatened by a cat accomplishes an astounding amount of noise.

The yellow-hammer or yellow-yolden has been the victim of superstition. The yellow on the bird's wings was regarded as a tinge of sulphur acquired in the infernal regions. Scotch boys spoke of the unhappy bird as wearing "the deil's livery," and called the red splashes on its eggs "draps o' deil's blude." Accordingly the poor little yellow-yolden was systematically persecuted, even to the length of the young birds being hung with stones tied to their necks head downwards, in token of

special hatred and scorn, after the fashion in which St. Peter suffered martyrdom.

Yellow-hammers are fond of snails for food. By a sunny seaside wall, rich in snails in their striped yellow-and-brown shells, embedded among sky-blue veronica, which grew there in great quantities, I have heard on a fine morning the "tap, tap" of many yellow-hammers as they took up the shells in their beaks and broke them against the stones, like the hammering of a company of masons in the distance.

The sparrow, always a dull-coloured, clumsily-shaped bird, and often rendered considerably dingier by smoke and soot, has kept company with civilized man so long and so closely as not only to have lost all shyness, but alas! all modesty also. The sparrow's irrepressible forwardness and pertness have been the cause of general complaint, and are, in fact, a considerable plague, so far as a long-tongued defiant thief who is at the same time so small can be a substantial plague. Nevertheless the sparrow has its defenders, and we are forced to forgive it a good deal for its dauntless power of endurance and merry chirruping on these bitter winter mornings, when its breakfast has probably been scanty and its tiny toes must be frozen. But we are told that much in the same way rogues and vagabonds show a redeeming side of stanchness and light-heartedness.

A flock of sparrows will boldly alight round a dog's plate when the dog has carried a bone to the distance of a few yards, and if the true owner of the meal give chase to the plunderers, a fresh flock, lying in wait, will seize the opportunity and the

spoil, before the dog can return from the pursuit of the enemy.

When a kind housekeeper regularly feeds these birds after every meal, the sparrows will soon learn to know the hours for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, as well as the family themselves, and will assemble beforehand on the adjacent trees and house-tops, while the visitors' strict punctuality is a tacit reproach to a dilatory cook.

An irritating propensity of suburban sparrows, from which their country brethren are free, is to devastate spring garden-borders in the matter of the crocuses, which form their first gay adornment. The birds will pluck to pieces the yellow petals and strew them all about in search of the saffron on the pistils and stamens.

It is not difficult to conceive Rousseau, half mad with morbid self-consciousness and vanity, imagining that a flock of noisy sparrows were mocking and jeering at him.

Bullfinches and goldfinches are pet companions of men and women because of their pleasant gift of song and the adaptability of ear and throat which enables them to learn our tunes and pipe them in turn. In addition, the birds can be taught various neat if formal performances.*

But a still more cherished while uncaged friend of man is the robin redbreast, with many a legend in his honour and praise. The origin of his Christian name is lost. I fancy the

* My chapter has to do with British birds, else I should have something to say for the canary, the halest, happiest occupant of a cage, because he is, as a rule, born and bred to it. The love of the boy Mozart for his canary is a charming episode of child-life.

"Robin" was applied to him to give him a more emphatic personification in his relation to Jenny Wren, so long believed devoutly to be his mate. His surname of "redbreast" is derived from a strong point in his personal appearance, and sticks to him wherever he goes, so that he is "*rouge-gorge*" in French and "*Roth-kehlchen*" in German.

The robin redbreast has won men's favour, not by submitting to be caged for their pleasure, but by coming to them in his need, in spite of his shyness, with trustful faith in their humanity. The plump little man in russet and red, with the twinkling black eye which is so watchful and yet so frank and open, can be persuaded to hop along with the sparrows on the snowy sill and accept his meal of crumbs. In return we load him with pleasant attributes and good deeds which he may or may not have done.*

On the awful day of the Crucifixion the robin was believed to have flown past Calvary in terror. Yet the sight of the cruel thorns in the holy brow arrested him. The bird sought in futile wrath and pity to pluck out one of these thorns with his little beak, when a drop of the sacred blood fell on his breast and dyed it for ever. Thus marked he sped to the Virgin with the token.

When the fatherless babes, be they princes or peasants, lay dead, locked in each other's arms in the wood, robin redbreast

* The most excellent people are not exempt from slander, and cruel scandal has arisen about the robin. He is not only said to be the most pugilistic of little birds; he has been recently accused of horrible filial impiety. It is whispered that when the young robins are full grown, they will turn the parent birds out of the nests, and take the place of the ousted heads of the family with shocking irreverence and heartlessness.

was said to have covered the little bodies reverently with leaves.

In the beautiful plaintive Irish song of Kathleen O'More, the singer, in the middle of his grief, suddenly utters the passionate protest—

“ Oh ! the bird of all birds that I love the best,
Is the robin that in the churchyard builds his nest ;
For he seems to love Kathleen, hops lightly o'er Kathleen,
My dear little Kathleen, my Kathleen O'More.”

The merry myths of the robin are all in connection with his imaginary spouse Jenny Wren. In this connubial light he figures always as the lordly and somewhat domineering little husband to whom she is the gay thoughtless little wife ; whether they begin amicably by supping “sops and wine” together, or whether he ends by dismissing her in dudgeon from his sickroom.

One version has it—

“ Robin Redbreast and Jenny Wren
Made their parritch in a pan,
Atween the kitchen and the ha'
Jenny let the parritch fa'.”

There is a curious fragment of an old Scotch ballad called “Robin Redbreast's Testament,” in which he is represented as bequeathing his various personalities in a characteristic fashion—

“ I leave this gude richt leg o' mine
That can neither bow nor stay ;
I leave this gude richt leg o' mine
To mend the brig o' Tay.”

Notwithstanding that the wren has been so intimately associated with the robin redbreast, and become the sharer of his praises in poetry and legend, the wren's actual fate has not, in some respects, been so happy. Most folks know the old rhyme—

“ The little robin and the wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.”

But in many rural districts the wren is regarded with aversion, its nests destroyed, and its eggs dashed to the ground. And



THE WREN.

this not from cruelty, but from some kind of superstitious feeling. The only explanation which the good folks who do this will vouchsafe you, is that the “wran” is the “*devil's*” bird, and should therefore get no quarter. Mr. Allingham, Ballyshannon, writes in *Science Gossip*: “This strange superstition has, I believe, had its origin in one of the many myths which have been handed down from generation to generation. In the south of Ireland it appears this unkindly feeling does not exist, which is shown by a curious practice which was in

vogue at no very distant date in Cork. On St. Stephen's Day a number of young men, in holiday dress, paraded the city, carrying a furze bush, in which a wren was secured. As they stopped before the house, one of their number recited the following lines :—

' The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
Was caught St. Stephen's Day in the furze ;
Although he's little, his family's great,
Then pray, kind gentlefolks, give him a *trate*.'



THE WOODPECKER.

It is to be hoped that this cruel and unmeaning dislike to a little bird of which poets have so sweetly sung, and naturalists so interestingly written, may ere long be swept away by advancing education."

"The woodpecker tapping the old elm-tree" is a line familiar to most persons. The woodpecker is a bird of peculiar habits, and is said to be an excellent weather-prophet. Charles Dickens has made some weirdly suggestive references to him in his vivid picture of Mr. Mold the undertaker, just when he is visited by Mrs. Sairey Gamp, as readers of the novelist will no doubt remember.

CHAPTER X.

Among Domestic Animals and Pets.

CHAPTER X.

AMONG DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND PETS.



THE horse, so magnificently described in the Book of Job as having his neck clothed with thunder, pawing in the valley, and rejoicing in his strength, has served man gallantly, and in return has been greatly valued by him ; but it seems to me that there has been, on the whole, more selfishness, on the man's side at least, in the alliance than is to be found in the friendship between the man and the dog. On the other hand, no horse, however faithful, has to my knowledge voluntarily left his kind to attach himself to a human being, or has pined and died for the loss of his master.

The horse's love of practising the military manœuvres it has learned by heart has been often noted. It has been displayed both pathetically and comically. The riderless horses resuming their places in the ranks of the cavalry fighting in one of the battles of the Franco-German war, and accompanying the other horses in every charge, wheel, and flank movement, as if the hands of the dead were still on the bridle-reins, formed a strange, touching episode. It must have thrilled the least superstitious with a sense of viewless sympathizers in the fortunes

of the day, shadowy combatants urging on old faithful servants to play their accustomed part, and advance or retreat for the cause of the fatherland.

A worthy old cock-laird of a bygone generation had acquired considerable credit for his soldierly qualities, and attained the rank of sergeant in a corps of local yeomanry. His stalwart figure was well known in the troop, but his good nag was at least as familiar there. It took kindly to the exercises, and was as fond of them as its master could be.

A pacific friend, who left the defence of the country to his neighbours, and kept out of the roll-call alike of yeomanry and militia, had an inveterate habit of borrowing old Harry's riding-horse. He had accomplished this easy arrangement on one occasion, and was riding comfortably along a quiet country road, when over the bean and bear fields, and between the hawthorn hedges, came the distant sound of the bugle-call from the yeomanry troop, then in the act of being drilled in a meadow half a mile distant. The good horse pricked up its ears, gave a preparatory pleased snort and paw with its right foot, and then started full speed for the field of operations. In vain the rider tugged at the bridle, shouted and coaxed; he was borne along like the wind, finding difficulty enough in keeping his seat, and before he knew what had happened he was in the centre of the yeomanry. The horse took up its usual station, and proceeded to go through the whole round of movements with the greatest zeal and precision, while the unfortunate rider, powerless in the dilemma, conspicuous by his brown coat among the regimentals, was greeted and followed by ill-repressed shouts of laughter. He

was heard to mutter indignantly, "O Harry, man, this wasna' fair; this is a muckle shame!" He had attributed the whole accident to a mischievous trick of his friend's in order to put an end for all time to come to the one-sided loan system in which the sufferer had been prone to indulge.

The Greek legend of the Centaurs is supposed to have arisen from the first conception of men on horseback, and no doubt Swift had the Centaurs in his mind in his hideous vision of the Yahoos. Yet a good rider on a good horse, answering to every sign given by his master, whether by bit or bridle, whip or spur, is an inspiring sight, and ought not to contribute to gruesome imaginations.

The horse has been a priceless comrade to man in the battle-field, the hunting-field, on the racecourse, and on the long and fatiguing roads over which the traveller must journey to reach his goal. Once and again the names of horses distinguished in such lines have been proudly handed down to us. We have all heard of "Bucephalus,"* whom Alexander had to conquer as the first step to conquering Asia; and most of us know something of "Copenhagen," which carried the Iron Duke over the field of Waterloo, and went to grass for the rest of his days, till he died full of years and honours, followed by a nation's lamentation. Nay, we have most of us heard of "Black Dick," more honest than his master, who bore a noted highwayman from London to York, and died in the faithful discharge of his duty. We have read of the Knight of Snowdon's "gallant

* The names of horses are legion. A few are traditional and of long standing, such as "Dobbin" for a cart-horse. A good or telling name for a race-horse is reckoned as almost of as much importance as a good name for a novel.

gray," and lamented the animal's untimely fate, and of Mazeppa's horse, which started on the wild gallop that was to take the unhappy master, stripped and bound on the senseless creature's back, to his far-distant home.

An incident of a happier description is that which Mr. Browning has "married to immortal verse" in "How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," where the rider tells how his swift steed Roland, as if apprehensive of the worth of the good news that he carried, galloped on after the others had fallen :—

" To bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet name, my horse without peer ;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground ;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news to Ghent."

But when all is said, though the horse "scents the battle from afar," and loves, it is said, the excitement of the chase and the race ; though he will turn his grand neck and neigh or whinny his affection, lick the soft hand which feeds him with apples or sugar, nay, even fix dying eyes of unquench-

able tenderness on the unrelenting rider who has spurred him to his destruction, still I never heard of the horse, under any amount of training, seeking to save life like the dog of St. Bernard, the mastiff, and the shepherd's colley, nor of the horse breaking its fond beast's heart over a departed master or mistress. More than that, the instances of the attachment of horses to each other are rare. The most conspicuous is an anecdote of two Hanoverian horses during the Peninsular war. They had drawn the same gun and been firm friends in many battles. When one was killed, the other refused food, took no notice of the remaining horses, kept looking for his lost companion, and, neighing as if to call him, at last died of pining for him. But the story forms an exception to ordinary experience. I am fain to think that the horse, in spite of his splendid gifts of strength and swiftness—made available to man by the animal's still goodlier qualities of courage, obedience, and usefulness—is less noble in some respects, a lower creature in the high attributes of love and constancy, than the dog.

The ass of the East was ridden by princes, and the colt was chosen to carry the Lord in His one triumphal progress through Jerusalem. The ass of the desert has also a fine tribute of admiration in Job. But it does not appear that he was marked by greater sagacity and devotion than belong to the horse, for the episode of Balaam's ass is given as purely miraculous.

The ass of the West is the symbol of patience, desolation, and rude nature. The Indians called him "the rabbit's

grandfather," and Englishmen have christened him "Neddy." Victor Hugo has written a poem on him, and painters have gone out of their way to paint him, but costermongers have till lately treated the poor shaggy brute with scant ceremony. Hard usage has developed his obstinacy and crushed his better nature. The only modern donkeys that have taught their masters doleful and merciful lessons have been Sterne's old



THE PET CALF.

man's dead ass, and Wordsworth's Peter Bell's savagely treated living servant.

The cow is far beneath the horse in her capability of willingly accepting and responding to man's overtures, though she has had a prominent place in ancient mythologies, and has won respect and regard by her special virtues and gifts to the human race. Men and women have contemplated with the utmost satisfaction her mild face, steady soft eyes, and ruminating process of chewing the cud, and have never tired of praising her gentle submission—tinged with stolidity—simple dignity, and sweet bountifulness. In her liberal relief of the

daily wants of a household, and her faithful supply of children's food, the cow has been the pet of the careful housekeeper and house-mother as well as of the dairymaid. Many a fondling appreciative name has been bestowed on her—Christian names by the dozen; "Duchess," or "Countess," in recognition of that sober dignity of which I have spoken; in Scotland, from personal peculiarities, "Brownie" (from the colour), "Cowie" (without horns), or "Hawkie" (a cow with a white face); in England "Primrose," or "Cowslip," or "Daisy," by the law of natural affinity.

There is a particular language, varying in different districts and countries, but common to the initiated, addressed to every kind of domestic animal. What "woah, wo, who, and gee-up" is to a horse or donkey, "proo" is to a cow, and the "proo" in Scotland is generally followed by the term "lady" or "leddy," in proper acknowledgment of the rank of the cow. One of the people's poets penned winsome verses on the animal:—

"Proo, Hawkie, proo!
Lowin' in the gloamin' hour
Comes my bonnie cow.

Buttercups and clover green,
A' day long her feast has been;
Syne she comes laden hame at e'en,
Proo, Hawkie, proo!

Bairmies for their parritch greet,
Proo, Hawkie, proo!
And maun hae milk their mou's to weet
Sweet and warm frae you.

When the gudewife stirs the tea,
Thicker cream there canna be;

Sic curds and whey ye'll seldom see
As yields my bonnie cow."

The bull in his solid power, liable to be dangerous in his stiff-neckedness, not to be overcome by threats and rash blows, but only by speaking fair, and by well-considered opposing force, has given a universally-accepted definition of an Englishman. John Bull does not kick at his name or deny the implication.

The winged ox was the emblem of strength under spiritual influence among the Assyrians, and as such the figure is taken up and employed in the Old and New Testament, especially in Ezekiel and the Revelation.

Paul Potter and other Dutch painters in the past, and Rosa Bonheur in the present, have written their names on "cattle."

The sheep, above all the lamb, like the dove among birds, is the chosen representative of innocence and gentleness. In their perfection of holiness, the qualities unite in *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God. The lamb bears its testimony to the spotless nature of the sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb," which shows a lamb as it had been slain, the central object of worship to bands of devout pilgrims of every class, country, and time, is in many respects one of the most beautiful and pathetic pictures in existence.

The Golden Fleece, in which the symbol of a sheep figures, is an old and highly-esteemed order of knighthood, with a strong flavour of the days of the great Emperor Charles V. and his

son Philip II. of Spain. Another and still older Golden Fleece, that of the winged golden ram which bore the doomed brother and sister to Colchis, floated before the lively imaginations of men, and formed the fitting lure to the Argonautic expedition.

Injudicious treatment may ruin even the most naturally



THE PET LAMB.

lovable of human beings and animals. The pet lamb, felicitously described by Wordsworth, instead of responding modestly to the gracious invitation—

“Drink, pretty creature, drink,”

is apt to grow up an insufferably forward and quarrelsome broad-backed sheep, intruding itself where least wanted, and

butting, right and left, friends and foes with the greatest impartiality.*

The swine is at the opposite animal pole from the lamb, standing, as the swine stands, for gross feeding, wallowing in the mire, and, in its wild state, brutal savagery of disposition. The miracle of the legion of devils entering into the herd of swine reads like an illustration of "like to like." Yet the young pig is not without its attractions even before it has been roasted and won the praise of Charles Lamb. It is helpless, like other young animals, and it is not without a sort of grotesque clumsy prettiness. Herrick made a pet of a little pig, suffering it to drink out of his cup. This was not uncharacteristic, perhaps; for if even a little of all that is said of the author of the lovely lyrics on the daffodils and rosebuds be true, he was not a model of an English clergyman and gentleman, but was self-indulgent and vagabondish in his habits.

Swine carrying straw in their mouths, and tossing about their bedding, form one of the tokens of an approaching storm.

* Scotch shepherds have a quaint little drama in which two lambs figure. The rhymes refer also to the three first days of April, called, from their proverbial inclemency, "the Borrowing Days," as well as "the Fool's" or "Gowk's Days."

"March said to April,
Do you see yon lambies on the hill?
I will grant you days three,
Gin you'll gar these twa lambies dee.

The first day it was wind and weat,
The second day it was snaw and sleet,
The third day it was sic a freeze
It stack the birds' nibs to the trees.

But when the three days were come and gane,
The twa little lambies cam' toddlin' hame."

"The Wild Boar of Ardennes" was the terrible nickname bestowed in the reign of the French king Louis XI. on William de la Marck, and did not prove unwelcome to him. To this day a wild boar's head is not unfamiliar among noble crests. The actual head of the boar is the dish at royal Christmas feasts. The head of the wild boar, crowned with vine leaves, was served after a boar-hunt and toasted in the same breath with the winner of the trophy :—

" To him who slew the great wild swine
One princely cup we pour,
And another from the brimming Rhine
We drink to the mighty boar."

In the poultry-yard the cock reigns triumphant. With his glossy plumage—black, brown, or white—red gold lines down his neck and back, white flaps to his ears, crimson comb to his head, and spurs to his feet, he is armed for conquest. As in the case of the cackling of geese, the crowing of a cock once saved a city ; so let them crow for all time, though they may break our rest at dawn of day, or before it.

"Proud chanticleer" we love to call him, and "cocky-leerie-law," and burst out into a song in his honour :—

" There was a little gentleman,
His name was Leerie Law,
He was the bravest gentleman
That ever lady saw."

He is more of a grand Turk than any other Englishman, with his harem of stupid hens, slavishly submissive to him, wrangling with each other. Nevertheless it is to our Gallic

neighbour that we apply with good-humoured irony the flap of the cock's wings, the rearing of his neck, the shrill utterance of his opinion. We speak of the Gallic cock, and take credit to ourselves for the accuracy of the comparison. The cock was the bird dedicated to Esculapius, the healer and the patron of physicians ; and it was the cock whose unconscious well-known



CHICKENS.

signal cut Peter to the heart, reminding the conscience-stricken man of his foretold base betrayal of his Master.

Hens are almost as silly in their timidity as geese are in their sheer inanity ; but the hen has one great redeeming feature in her nature—the strength of the maternal instinct which makes the frightened creature risk all and dare all for her brood. Who can forget the simple tender figure of the hen gathering her chickens under her wings to keep them safe from danger and loss which the Lord used in pleading with Jerusalem ?

“Don’t sell your chickens before they are hatched” has become a proverb in consequence of the extensive popularity of the pretty story of the day-dreaming girl with her basket of eggs. Everybody has heard how she mentally hatched them, sold the chickens, made bargains with the proceeds, married her lover, settled herself and him comfortably in life, and was only violently awakened from the delightful vision by the toppling over of the basket and the crash which announced the destruction of its brittle contents.

The duck in the farmyard is more independent and less easily scared than the hen, though as a wild duck, when her beauty comes out, she is liable to panics. But it is hard to say how her name ever came to be employed as a slang term of endearment.

Hans Christian Andersen’s “Ugly Duck,” which was not a duck at all, but a swan in its early stage, is wellnigh as renowned as the girl’s unhatched chickens, and teaches as necessary a lesson to the ordinary ducks who quacked the intruder down.

A lame duck is one of the odd pets which various men and women have adopted.

Barndoor geese are the sheer blockheads with whom they are apt to be associated. The utter vacuity of their expression as they waddle along, shooting out their necks and gabbling in chorus, is not surpassed in the whole animal kingdom. The gander, when he has a name, is in Scotland invariably “Watty,” while the goose is “Jenny.”*

* The Royal game of Goose, played on a round circle on pasteboard, was a once popular pastime very much in keeping with the name it had borrowed.

The turkey cock is "Jock," and a rude and blustering Jock he is, when he swells out, reddens, and shakes furiously the hanging bells about his throat, stalks and gobbles round his weak-minded cowed hen.

In the house the cat and dog reign jointly, whether or not they lead a cat - and - dog life together. The cat, sleekest, softest, cleanest, lightest-footed of animals, would win her way, even apart from her prowess in killing mice, with the most rigidly particular of housekeepers. She is not difficult to procure or expensive to maintain, thus she is to be met with in every household. She is the plaything of the nursery, and the friend of the poor still more than of the rich. She is, as a rule, a lover of quiet and ease, and her very aspect is one of comfort.

" Winking puss wi' mealy mou'
Is playing round the fire,"

supplies the last touch to an attractive home picture. Regarded in one light the cat has many virtues : it is only to say she is fallible to add she has her vices—if only these vices were of a more pardonable description. But she is by nature stealthy, cunning, treacherous, and cruel. With honourable exceptions, she is a notorious thief. Give her the least encouragement, and she is the most importunate and wearisome of beggars. As a rule, her affection for places is greater than it is for persons ; and she will forsake her old master and mistress in order to return to the home they have left to strangers. At the best she has rarely been known to abandon any of her cherished habits in order to attach herself more

closely to human beings. She is a lover of darkness, and prefers prowling in it to walking in the light, while her cries make night hideous.

So little was the cat in esteem with the mediæval painters, that they were wont to represent her as the incarnate fiend seated behind Judas. Indeed the idea of the cat as the familiar spirit of witch and warlock was widely prevalent. I do not know if Roger Bacon prosecuted his discoveries attended by a cat, but long centuries afterwards, Napier, the discoverer of logarithms, was believed by the credulous country-people to learn some of the secrets of mathematics from his black cat.

In spite of the flaws in her reputation, the cat, with her playfulness in youth and decorum in age, and her gentle endearments at all times, has been much loved for her own sake by men as well as by women and children. The well-bred cynic Montaigne owned to a fondness for his cat. The Zouaves in Africa and the undergraduates at Cambridge have compensated themselves for the compulsory loss of dogs' society by going on the march, and walking about the quads with cats on their shoulders.

"Greymalkin," "Greythrums" (a tune which she is supposed to sing when she purrs), and "Bawdrons" are among the choice endearing names for a cat. Her kitten is "Kitty." Children call her spitting swearing, and gravely reprove her for the number of oaths which pass her lips on severe provocation.

Notwithstanding the common love of cats, there is a vulgar error that they will, when they can, suck the breath of a sleeping child, so as to produce death. The mistake must have arisen

from the simple love of warmth which induces the animal to haunt beds and cradles, and to nestle up to the breast and throat of a sleeper. It is just possible that the practice, in extraordinary circumstances, where a child was very weakly, may have occasioned suffocation.

The dog, frank, courageous, faithful to death, obedient, confiding, generous, tender, has all the animal instincts which come nearest to moral qualities, in the very highest development.



THE RETRIEVER.

And what a range of physical beauties and mental excellences she possesses ! from the grace and speed of the greyhound, the power and stanchness of the mastiff, the sagacity and indefatigableness of the colley and terrier, to the loveliness and comicality of the King Charles' spaniel and the pug. No doubt we have also the ferocity of the bulldog, and the relentlessness of the bloodhound, but even these can be trained and directed to good uses.

It is strange to think from what a low beginning—that of the wild dog feeding on carrion and fleeing from men, so noble

and kindly an animal has arisen. In the East and in the past, where and when the first type of dog prevailed, the allusion to it is generally one of repugnance and loathing. Thus almost every reference to the dog in the Bible is to an odious and abhorred brute, the image of all that is base and foul.

The popular idea of the dog had changed altogether, when on the stately tombs of the middle ages the sculptors carved hounds as emblems of fidelity, just as they carved lions as signs of strength. What legends and stories we have of individual dogs, kings of their kind, and fortunate dogs, dependants on owners of whom the world is not weary of hearing! The dog of Montargis tracked and brought to bay his master's murderer. Poor Gelert's hound loyally defended his charge from the wolf, yet on a moment's rash suspicion was slain beyond remedy by his unhappy master's hand. Humble Greyfriars' Bobby was content to lie night after night for a term of months and years on the cold grave of his nameless master. Sir Isaac Newton's little dog Diamond suffered only the mildest reproof for the mischief he had done when he knocked over the lit taper among the philosopher's priceless calculations.* Sir Walter Scott's great staghound Maida lives still in the list of his master's friends, as well as in marble effigy at Abbotsford. Miss Mitford's spaniel Dash is for ever associated with the country rambles which made sunny Berkshire familiar to readers beyond the seas. Colonel Butler's *Cerf-vola* will not soon be forgotten as he toiled along in the "boots" which

* Madame de Sevigné pledged herself to love no other dog save her pet *Morphise*. She got *Fidèle*, "a little scented darling," from a friend; but *Fidèle* was kept in another house, and *Morphise* remained ignorant of the existence of the other dog.

preserved his wounded feet in dragging his master's sledge over the frozen snow of the prairies of "the Great Lone Land." Time and space will not permit me to add to the long list of brave, faithful, dearly-held dogs, men's best allies among the lower animals.

But one of the most touching utterances of the intimate association possible between dogs and human beings is perhaps Mrs. Barrett Browning's poem "To Flush, my Dog," a few stanzas of which so completely tell the story that I must be allowed to quote them :—

" Other dogs may be thy peers
Haply in these drooping ears
And this glossy fairness.

But of thee it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
Day and night unweary,
Watched within a curtained room,
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom
Round the sick and dreary.

Roses gathered for a vase,
In that chamber died apace,
Beam and breeze resigning ;
This dog only waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone,
Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dew
Tracked the hares and followed through
Sunny moor or meadow ;
This dog only crept and crept
Next a languid cheek that slept,
Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs of loyal cheer
Bounded at the whistle clear,
Up the woodside hieing ;
This dog only watched in reach
Of a faintly-uttered speech
Or a louder sighing.

And if one or two quiet tears
Dropped upon his glossy ears,
Or a sigh came double,
Up he sprang in eager haste,
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast
In a tender trouble.

And this dog was satisfied
If a pale thin hand would glide
Down his dewlaps sloping—
Which he pushed his nose within,
After—platforming his chin
On the palm left open.

This dog, if a friendly voice
Call him now to blither choice
Than such chamber-keeping,
'Come out !' praying from the door
Presseth upwards as before,
Up against me leaping.

Therefore to this dog will I,
Tenderly not scornfully,
Render praise and favour ;
With my hand upon his head,
Is my benediction said
Therefore and for ever."

Henry David Thoreau, an American of French parentage, exhibited the power over animals in a very remarkable degree. Mr. H. A. Page in his biography of Thoreau * has given some

* Thoreau : his Life and Aims. (Mayfair Library.) Chatto & Windus. 2s. 6d.

very striking instances of this, describing particularly the incidents of his life while he dwelt for more than two years in the hut he had built for himself far from all neighbours in Walden Wood, on the border of Walden Lake. I shall not be blamed, I hope, for borrowing too much if I make a few short selections here :—

“ Having now but few human companions, in the shape of occasional visitors—Emerson, one of his nearest neighbours, amongst them—he honestly tried what the lower creatures could do for him. And soon he and they were on the most intimate terms. The fishes came, as it seemed, into his hand if he but dipped it in the stream ; the mice would come and playfully eat out of his fingers, and the very mole paid him friendly visits ; sparrows alighted on his shoulder at call ; phœbes built in his shed ; and the wild partridge with her brood came and fed quietly beneath his window as he sat and looked at them. He himself had thus celebrated his first domestic companions in Walden :—

“ ‘ The mice which haunted my house were not the common ones, which are said to have been introduced into the country, but a wild native kind not found in the village. I sent one to a distinguished naturalist, and it interested him much. When I was building, one of these had its nest underneath the house, and before I had laid the second floor, and swept out the shavings, would come out regularly at lunch-time and pick up the crumbs at my feet. It probably had never seen a man before ; and it soon became quite familiar, and would run over my shoes and up my clothes. It could readily ascend

the sides of the room by short impulses, like a squirrel, which it resembled in its motions. At length, as I leaned with my elbow on the bench one day, it ran up my clothes and along my sleeve, and round and round the paper which held my dinner, while I kept the latter close, and dodged and played at bo-peep with it; and when at last I held still a piece of cheese between my thumb and finger, it came and nibbled it, sitting in my hand, and afterward cleaned its face and paws, like a fly, and walked away.

“A phœbe soon built in my shed, and a robin for protection in a pine which grew against the house. In June the partridge (*Tetras umbellus*), which is so shy a bird, led her brood past my windows, from the woods in the rear to the front of my house, clucking and calling to them like a hen, and in all her behaviour proving herself the hen of the woods. The young suddenly disperse on your approach, at a signal from the mother, as if a whirlwind had swept them away; and they so exactly resemble the dried leaves and twigs that many a traveller has placed his foot in the midst of a brood, and heard the whir of the old bird as she flew off, and her anxious calls and mewing, or seen her trail her wings to attract his attention, without suspecting their neighbourhood. The parent will sometimes roll and spin round before you in such a déshabille, that you cannot for a few moments detect what kind of creature it is. The young squat still and flat, often running their heads under a leaf, and mind only their mother's directions given from a distance, nor will your approach make them run again and betray themselves. You may even tread

on them, or have your eyes on them for a minute, without discovering them. I have held them in my open hand at such



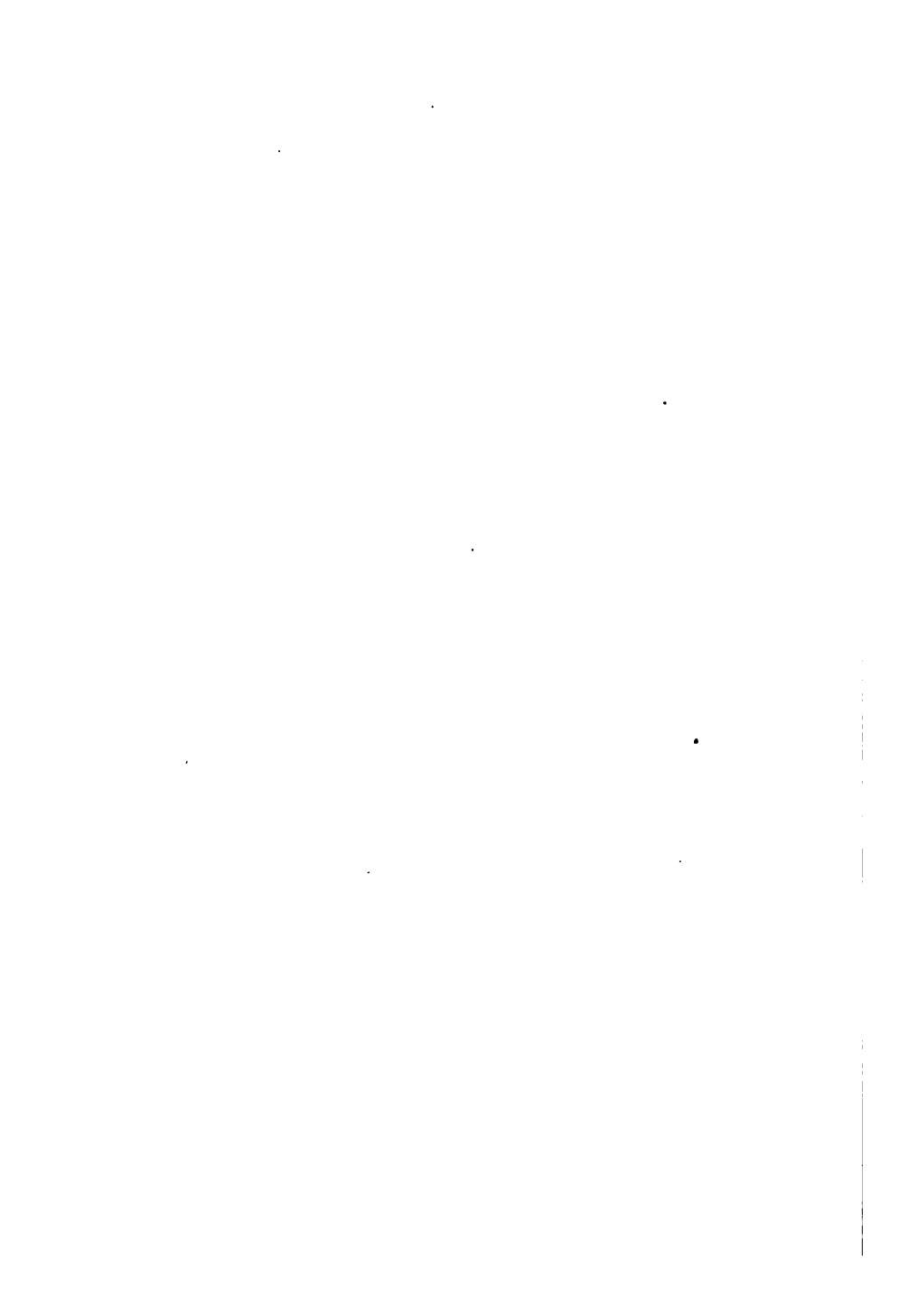
THOREAU AND HIS PETS.

a time, and still their only care, obedient to their mother and their instinct, was to squat there without fear or trembling. So perfect is this instinct, that once, when I had laid them on the

leaves again, and one accidentally fell on its side, it was found with the rest in exactly the same position ten minutes afterwards. They are not callow, like the young of most birds, but more perfectly developed and precocious even than chickens.'

"One of his friends has given an almost ludicrous account of his helpless endeavours to free himself from the society of a squirrel of a peculiar species, which he had taken for a time in order to observe its habits and mode of movements. More than once he conveyed the little creature to the tree from which he had taken it, but it immediately returned to his hand, sat there, and declined to betake itself to its old haunts—at length hiding its head in the folds of his waistcoat, a demonstration that he could not resist. He therefore marched his pet back to the hut."

This is quite as marvellous and quite as touching as some of the stories told of St. Francis. One day, we read, a live leveret was brought to him. His gentle heart was moved to pity, and he said, "Little brother leveret, come to me;" and although he desired the creature to escape, it always returned and nestled in the cloak of the loving father. The same story is told of a wild rabbit. "It still returned," says his biographer, Bonaventura, "into the father's bosom, as if it had some hidden sense of the pitifulness of his heart."



CHAPTER XI.

**Among a few of the Wild Beasts and Living
Creatures, great and small, of the
British Islands.**

CHAPTER XI.

AMONG A FEW OF THE WILD BEASTS AND LIVING CREATURES,
GREAT AND SMALL, OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS.

IVILIZATION has only left us one or two beasts of prey. The most notable of these, the fox, is not merely suffered, but protected and cherished till his doom is at hand, in order that a manly form of amusement may not fall to the ground without his aid. In himself he is not very honourable. With a greater outward resemblance to the dog than to the cat, he has many of the worst feline qualities—cunning, secrecy, greed, etc. His first attribute, cunning, is stamped upon him, and has become a byword wherever his name is mentioned. In Scotland he has a Christian name in addition to his surname. He is not only the Tod, he is Tod-Lowrie (a familiar rendering of Lawrence). I am tempted to believe some crafty Lawrence, belonging to one of the learned professions, I need not say which, gave ground for the application of the name.

Of the fox and his propensities much might be said. These are identified with an old-fashioned game, once common among country-people, and still played in remote Saxon Switzerland, "The Fox and the Lambs," or in Scotch, "The

Tod and the Lamb-brod," where the fox is represented by a major peg of wood, and the lambs are indicated by minor pegs stuck into holes in a board, the pegs being movable at pleasure, for the purpose of carrying on the mimic warfare.

That the fox's tail, when it has been captured, changes its name into that of the brush is a double tribute to the dignity which pursuit has given to it, and to the use to which it may be put by a housewife, when it is not simply treasured as an



THE FOX.

evidence of its owner's having been first in at the death, and saluted as the foremost horseman or horsewoman by the huntsman. There is an odd proverb connected with a fox's tail. If man or woman sneeze thrice on a Sunday morning, and fail to think of a fox's tail, he or she—whether blessed or unblessed by considerate companions—will certainly receive a present. The English surname Fox has an historical interest in this country, belonging as it does to the few surviving representatives of the family of a great statesman.

The stag is not a beast of prey, that is, he does not prey on other animals, while he himself is the prey of man and dogs. But the goodly creature will turn at bay, and there was formerly a strong belief in the deadly nature of a gore received from a wild deer's horns. The warning ran—

“ If thou be hurt with horn of hart, it brings thee to thy bier ;
But barber's hand shall boar's hurt heal, thereof have thou no fear.”

One of the two versions of the old ballad “ Lord Ronald, my Son ” gives this explanation of the tragedy :—

“ Whaur gat ye that red mark,
Lord Ronald, my son ?
Whaur gat ye that red gash,
My gallant young man ?

cries the alarmed mother when the victim suddenly staggers into her presence with blood on his brow, and sinks in a death-swoon at her feet. But first she receives the faint answer, which to her experienced ear conveys his doom. It was in the morning's hunting when the timid stag turned and struck with his glorious antlered head at the hunter that the fatal scratch was inflicted.

The great animal-painter Landseer loved the stag and his surroundings, and made them his own. It is hard to think of the animal without recalling “ In Sanctuary,” “ The Children of the Mist,” and many other beautiful pictures.

Hares and rabbits, though belonging to one tribe, and possessing a marked family likeness, are widely apart in some respects. A tame hare is a rare sight. Domesticated rabbits are the pets *

* Tradition represents a white rabbit as the pet and companion of St. John the Evangelist.

and playthings of children everywhere. William Cowper was able to tame three young hares, and found a solace for his dark moods in watching the shy wild creatures Puss, Tiny, and Bess, so far civilized as to frolic in the character of captives on the parlour floor. Puss is a well-known title transferred from the cat to the hare. In Scotland the word "Cutty" is applied in three senses—to a hare, to a thoughtless woman, and to a short black pipe. Can any one explain the triple analogy? The delicate trefoil leaves of the wood sorrel, supposed to be loved by hares, are called "Cutties' clover." Every Scotchman must think of their vivid green when he reads Charles Kingsley's fierce ballad of the "Poacher's Widow" with the tuft of grass rank from the blood of a murdered man. The old term coney is a figure of desolation.

Rats and mice have not been omitted in the choice of pets, though in general there is an instinct of humanity which recoils from the desperately keen little faces, sharp teeth, and restless eyes. It requires the extreme isolation of a prison to render a rat a welcome companion, such as he was to the German Baron Trenck. Yet there is a line of an old Scotch song which singles him out not only jocularly but affectionately—

"Uncle Rotten wi' his black face."

And the desertion of a house or a ship by rats or mice is regarded as an evil omen presaging the fall of the one or the wreck of the other. As a rule, rats and mice do not congregate in company, the greater vermin drive out the smaller. The mouse, especially the small brown-and-grey coated field-

mouse is a much more lovable little creature than the rat. The same song which speaks of "Uncle Rotten" describes the mouse with fond detail as

"Leddy Mousie at her mill-pin."



THE FIELD-MOUSE.

To the field-mouse Burns dedicated the tender pathetic verses which sadly record that

"The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,"

and with a poet's big heart hails the

"Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie"

as "a fellow-mortal."

The prejudice against rats and mice extends in full force

to the long lithe weasel or whittret (white-throat), which has been believed, on slender authority, to be a blood-sucker watching for an opportunity to carry out its fell purpose.

The pretty and harmless little shrew-mouse was formerly credited, by ignorant rustics, with the power of inflicting cramp on other animals by merely passing over them, or touching them. The only remedy was to touch the afflicted



THE SHREW-MOUSE.

part with a sprig of shrew-ash, that is, an ash which had been specially prepared by plugging up a living shrew into the tree-trunk. Of such barbarities does ignorance of nature make men guilty.

It has been surmised that the number of these pretty little animals found dead in footpaths is due to the fact that they are killed by owls, who do not take them as food. But this explanation has been questioned by good naturalists, who say that the remains of the shrew-mouse have been found in pellets

ejected by the barndoor owl; and this view is taken by Mr. Bell in his "British Quadrupeds" (p. 144). But no full and proper explanation of the cause of the death of so many of these little animals on footpaths has, so far as we are aware, been given, and the peculiarity of the circumstance has led to a superstition in various parts of the country. Mr. Bell writes: "So many may be found at early autumn lying dead on the roads or footways, or on other bare ground near their haunts, as to have led to the belief among country-people that the shrew could not cross a public way without incurring instant death. We confess ourselves wholly unable to furnish any explanation, having failed to discover any cause of death."

The mole was "the little gentleman in black velvet" to whom the Jacobites drank a cowardly toast in gratitude for his having caused the death of William of Orange.

The squirrel stands for agility and vivacity, the dormouse for lethargy, and the hedgehog for a complete armour of defence, resulting in general insensibility. The hedgehog has also the capacity of feigning insensibility and death.

It has been the object of several very mistaken notions—among them the idea that it robbed the cows of their milk whilst sleeping. This is still believed in some parts of the country, and may be classed with the superstitious dread of the shrew and the old belief in its hurtful touch. The skin is used sometimes as a muzzle when weaning a calf, and sometimes is fastened to the pole of a carriage to prevent the horses from rubbing against it. These are the only uses to which, so far

as I know, the hedgehog is put in England,* though I believe it is eaten in some countries by the poor, and perhaps in our own by the gipsies. Gipsy lore, at all events, gives considerable countenance to this idea. In Mr. Leland's collection



THE HEDGEHOG.

of gipsy songs, for example, one will be found in which occur the following stanzas :—

“ Oh, the eggs and bacon ;
And oh, the eggs and bacon ;
And the gentleman and lady
A-walking by the way !
And if you will be my sweetheart,
And if you will be my sweetheart,
And if you will be my darling,
I will be your own to-day.

Oh, I found a jolly hedgehog ;
Oh, I found a good fat hedgehog ;
Oh, I found a good big hedgehog,
In the wood beyond the town :

* A tame hedgehog suffered to roam about a kitchen floor by night is the best extirpator of beetles.

And there came the lord and lady,
 The handsome lord and lady,
 And underneath the branches
 I saw the two sit down."*

The frog, toad, or puddock is a ludicrous, harmless creature constantly burlesqued. Shakespeare treats him and his fine eyes with comparative respect when he writes of adversity as like a toad with a jewel in its head. The merry old song

"A froggie would a-woeing go,"

which some antiquarians hold to be a political ballad of the time of the Merry Monarch, who comes in as Rowley in the refrain, forms a good example of the more ordinary mode of dealing with the frog. The fact that our French neighbours find him edible, and compound a *fricassée* of his thighs, has brought upon each clever cook and complacent partaker of the feast, the mocking sobriquet of "Jean Crapaud."

One of Correggio's frescoes was satirized, because of the exaggerated elegance of the length and the sprawl of legs and arms in the work, as a "Fricassée of Frogs."

The glowworm is nature's tiny lamp.

The butterfly, in its unapproachable beauty, and in its transformation from a crawling caterpillar, a slumbering unsightly chrysalis, to a lovely winged creature, the queen of the air, was with more reason than in the case of the serpent the ancient emblem of immortality. In the myth of Psyche, the nymph loved by Cupid and slain by Venus, Psyche represented the soul, of which the butterfly was also the symbol. When

* Leland's English Gipsy Songs, p. 89.

the Greeks painted a man recently dead, they made a butterfly flutter above him as if it had just sprung out of his mouth.

The butterfly's sober sister the moth—often very fair also in its black and white velvet—has been viewed in one instance, because of the death's-head marks, in the contrary light of a sign of mortality, and a visitor that forebodes sorrow. And a



much smaller insect, which produces a ticking rather than a humming sound, inspires still greater terror as the "death-watch," marking the near flight of a human soul.

The brown cricket, with his privileged chirp, is a messenger of good luck to the hearth as a swallow is to the window, and few maid-servants will consent to do him harm. One of the best of Dickens's Christmas stories was an idyl of which the cricket on the hearth formed the central figure.

The unassuming bee and ant, engrossed with duty and business, have been employed as examples of industry, improving each shining hour, and laying up stores for the future, from the days of King Solomon to those of Dr. Isaac Watts.

The golden bee shared with the violet the office of besprinkling the imperial robes of the Buonapartes. Still pleasanter allies of the bees were the blind Huber and his wife, who became their historians.



A strange story is told of the recovery of the long-lost plan of the great Cologne Cathedral. When the modern architect was searching for it at his wits' end, and had only been able to find the half of the design in a library in France, he came on the other half when smoking away his despair in the garden of a village inn in Germany. The precious parchment had been battered over a wooden stand on which beehives were placed.

The bee, like the fly, was worshipped by the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians. The meaning of the Hebrew woman's name Deborah, once popular in England, and borne by one of the daughters of John Milton, is a bee.

We are no doubt familiar enough with bees, and yet some of us may not be aware that they are said to be nervously afraid of bad weather, which causes them to take speedy refuge in their holes and hives.

The spider and the fly not only pose in the pretty child's song, they act a perennial parable of the tempter and his victim. They gave a name to a well-known Royal Academician's recent picture, in which the satire does not lack breadth and robustness. An old national recollection renders the slimy spider in a manner sacred to the Scotch nation. Because of the story of Robert Bruce and the spider, with its seven attempts to fix its web to the beam, which taught the good and gallant king his last lesson of patience and endurance in adversity, no true Scot will kill a spider.

The glutinous threads of the fine gossamer web of the spider have been found of use in closing up leeches' bites, so as to prevent excessive bleeding.

Spiders are said to spin short threads in bad weather. When they spin long threads, it is held to be a certain sign of calm and sunshine.

The common fly with his wonderful eyes furnished an object for the wanton cruelty of a Roman emperor, as well as for the mindless mischief of hosts of ignorant, unfeeling school-boys.

A small regiment of far tinier flies was once trained by an ingenious showman, who carried them about the country, feeding them on his arm, a cheap mode of maintenance, in the intervals of their performance. One of them, with a

morsel of red cloth on its back, actually played as the Duke of Wellington.

The little spotted lady-bird belongs to the Virgin. Its Scotch name, "Katie King's dochter," has a pleasant flavour of German legends. Another more inexplicable name is "Bishop Burnaby." There is a rhyme attached to the lady-bird which bids it fly away home, for it will find its house on fire—a prediction possibly arising from the live spark-like spots on its body. The lady-birds will collect in hundreds about rose-bushes beset by the green-fly, and form the gardener's best ally against that pest of the rose-garden.

A still smaller bright scarlet insect is naturally known to the vulgar by the descriptive title of "soldier." Whether from the title or the flaming hue, there is a prevalent notion that he bites severely.

Ants—these models of industry—are sometimes styled "ennemies" by country-people. Like many diligent improvers of their time, the little creatures are neither considerate nor forbearing to those who come in their way and interfere with their proper business. Any one who has trodden rashly on an anthill, or sat down too near it, will bear out the accusation inferred in the term "enemy." At the same time it probably owes its rise, in part, to a corruption of the word "emmet."

Midges and mites are bywords for smallness. The midge, in addition, points the moral for all that is ephemeral, since it is the creature of a day.

In the sea the whale has retained an element of strangeness

and mystery, and his name has become slang for an outrageous fable.

The shark following the ship is looked upon by the sailor as a harbinger of burials at sea.

The seal with its gentle woman's eyes and small round brown head may have given rise to the mermaid myth. The destruction of salmon and other fish by the seal renders it highly unpopular with fishermen. Highlanders had a superstition that the fallen spirits inhabited the "selchies."

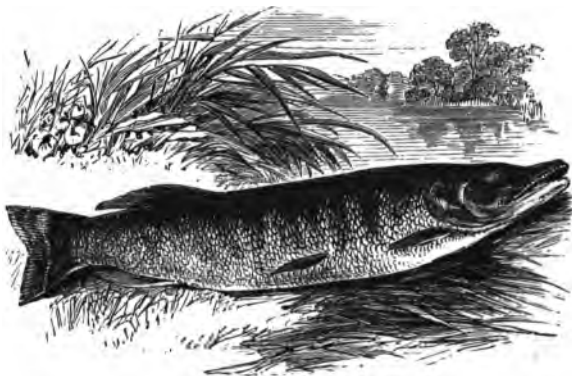
The sturgeon is reckoned a royal perquisite, and ought to appear only on the Queen's table.

The salmon must be studied and tickled far up Highland streams. It was described by Franklin as "a bit of silver pulled out of the water." The fish invariably returns to its native stream. The salmon of one river can be known from that of another. An experienced observer will at once say, "That is a Tay fish, while this is from the Isla." When the British Solomon, King Jamie, meditated a return visit from England to Scotland, he said "he was drawn thereto by a maist salmon-like affection." *

The pike, though it has its merits, is not to be compared to salmon. It has an awkward association with greedy ravenousness. In consequence of the incautious experiment of a Scotch nobleman who introduced pike into some of his northern lochs, many another loch and stream, which once abounded with salmon to the great profit of the neighbourhood, has been devastated by the intruder, which has come, seen, and conquered to the length of displacing the original denizen of the waters.

* Contributions to Natural History by a Rural D.D.

The pike is an angry, hungry, and cruel monster. Norfolk, Mr. T. E. Taylor tells us, is the paradise of the pike. "We may read in the newspapers of his growing to an enormous size in some solitary fish-pond,* where, for aught we know, he may have reigned supreme since the days when the pre-Elizabethan monks placed him there as a young pikeral. But nowhere does the average size of pike equal their condition in



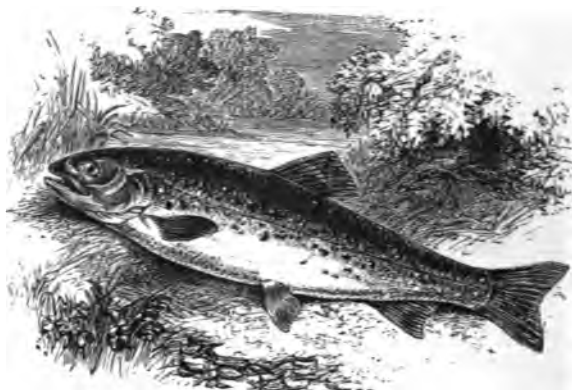
THE PIKE.

the Norfolk rivers and broads. There you find them in all ages and sizes, from the three-inch jack just trying his 'prentis han' on the equally juvenile roach and dace, to the still-growing, elderly individuals over three feet long. Their number is legion, and Norfolk pike-fishing, in my estimation, beats both trout and salmon fishing for right-down good sport. If you are inclined to be sentimental and to subscribe to Mr. Freeman's views about hunting, you have the satisfaction of know-

* In the ponds of Versailles the pike are old enough and strong enough to struggle successfully with the swans for bits of bread flung to them by the visitors.

ing, when pike-fishing, that you have not lured poor, herbivorous creatures to their destruction, but simply caught the carnivorous cannibal that intended to do unto others what you intend to do to him ! ”

The trout, the chosen victim of gentle anglers, has the reputation of being both easily tickled and affronted. It is the representative river-fish. It was into the sea and not the river that



THE TROUT.

Polycrates, recoiling from his own unalloyed prosperity with its ominous presage, flung his precious ring. But it must have been a trout—albeit a sea-trout—which swallowed it and allowed itself to be caught shortly by an honest fisherman, to whom it disgorged the gem, which was carried back straightway, with ignorant glee, to the horrified king.

In shrimps there are two thread-like figures which are named Adam and Eve.

In the head of the herring a portion resembling a hoof is called "the deil's cloot."

The herring is the fish of Scotch songs as well as a great source of wealth to the coasts which the herring frequents. Lady Nairne wrote in its honour the fine lyric

"Wha'll buy caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth?"

The proverb "as dead as a herring" is explained as arising from the fact that the herring, in consequence of a peculiarity in its gills, dies the instant it is removed from the water. Unlike the salmon, the herring is capricious in revisiting the same place. It will, indeed, return to one spot for many years, but then the fish will, without any apparent provocation, desert the locality for as long a period. Naturally, both because of its value and its whims, the herring is treated with great respect. An impression prevailed at one time that the hearing of the fish was marvellously acute, and that by offending this sense the herring might be scared from the shores, to which its presence was an unmitigated blessing. In the light of this danger, the ringing of the church bells in a seaward parish in the east of Scotland was strictly forbidden during the whole of the herring season. A silver-looking morsel found in the body of the herring is viewed reverentially, and styled its "life."

The specially large and fat herrings drawn from Loch Fyne, on the west coast of Scotland, bear the local name of "Glasgow Magistrates."

The haddock carries on his jaw a dark spot, believed to be the mark of Peter's thumb as he took from the fish's mouth

the piece of money which was to pay the tribute for himself and his Master.

The John Dory has his familiar title easily explained by his yellow back. His name is a corruption of *Jaune Dorée*.

There are various superstitions connected with eels. An ancient article of faith was that they came from May dew. A more recent and less poetical myth insisted that they could be *grown* from a handful of hair taken from a horse's tail and cast into a pool. It is curious how widely spread and obstinately held this delusion was, in fact it is only recently exploded in Scotland. The writer knew at least one person of middle age who stuck to the story, using the unanswerable argument that she had tried the experiment and found it perfectly successful.

The eel loves mud, but he will live in a mountain well, whose pure depths he is supposed to keep clean. A toll-keeper in a northern glen had such a pet for many years. At last he was forced to leave his home, toll, and eel for a few days. He intrusted them to a friend, to whom he gave the eel in special charge, proudly mentioning, in the singleness of his heart, its virtues and accomplishments. On the poor man's return he found that in his absence the so-called friend had in the most barbarous of practical jokes killed and eaten the eel.

In the lobster a bit can be picked out which has a singular resemblance in miniature to such a woman's bust as often forms the figure-head of a ship. Old-fashioned people and children mention it by the romantic name of "the Lady of the Lobster."

There is a variety of crab known as the soldier or hermit crab, because it dwells in strange tents and cells—shells borrowed from other fish—and whisks from one to the other with soldier-like celerity and philosophic ease.

The starfish is shaped like a star with five rays. In like manner the sea-mouse and every other strange living creature of the deep with a namesake on the land reflects the image of that namesake. The most striking of these analogies is that between the sea-anemone and the earth flowers of which it is a lovely copy.

The sea-serpent, in spite of Victor Hugo and many imaginative sailors, exists only in fable.

The oyster, like the eel, is a foul feeder. His beard has bestowed on him a certain manly dignity, but he is far more identified with apathy than with manliness. The phrase "life of an oyster" means a life of dull inactivity. Nevertheless individual oysters have been known to attain distinction by bestirring themselves to utter humming songs. Such an oyster fell into the possession of a lucky London publican, who realized a considerable sum of money by advertising and showing the fish for a fee as "the singing oyster."

The adhesive properties of the limpet define him as the bore who cannot be shaken off; whereas the cockle-shell was part of the old insignia of a pilgrim, who wore a row round his hat as a hint of his wanderings.

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